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FIFTIETH YEAR

# Prabuddha Bharata

OR

## AWAKENED INDIA

Vol. L

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JANUARY—DECEMBER, 1945

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उत्तिष्ठत जाप्रत प्राप्य वरान्निवोधत  
Proceeded by  
Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached

Editorial Office  
MAYAVATI, ALMORA, HIMALAYAS

Publication Office  
4, WELLINGTON LANE, CALCUTTA

Subscription : Inland, Rupees Four; Foreign, Eleven Shillings or Three Dollars.  
Inland, Single Copy, Annas Seven.

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*Editor : SWAMI YOGESHWARANANDA*





## PARTHASARATHI

*By Nandalal Bose*

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. L

JANUARY, 1945

No. 1



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत् प्राप्य धर्मग्निं विभृतः ।”

“Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI SHIVANANDA

BELUR MATH, KARTIK 11, THURSDAY, 1327 (BENG. ERA).

It is morning. As usual, monks are, one by one, gathering in the room of Mahapurush<sup>1</sup> Maharaj. Today he appears specially grave and indrawn. There is hardly any talk in the room. A monk belonging to a branch centre has been at the Math for some days past. Describing his mental condition he said to Mahapurushji, 'Maharaj, of prayer, etc. I am doing all I can. But curiously enough I find no joy in it, often I find myself doing it as if for the sake of routine. There is no satisfaction, no peace, either'.

Mahapurushji replied very gently, 'Look, my son, it is no easy matter to attain peace. The path to it is very difficult—very thorny. "Sharp and impassable like the razor's edge—that is how the wise characterize this path." This is the testimony of those who have experienced the truth. Indeed it is a very difficult path. It is not as easy as it may appear to an outsider. It involves an enormous struggle. But it is true, at the same time, one can get His grace, if one wants it sincerely. Don't you see how even Thakur<sup>2</sup> himself had to struggle? He got

the Mother's vision only after that. Of course, in his case all this was for the education of men. His case is different. But nothing is possible without love for Him. And the love must be genuine. It is just as Thakur used to say: God is realized if love for Him is as intense as the following three kinds of love put together: a chaste woman's love for her husband, a mother's love for her child and a miser's love for his wealth. One can realize God, and experience joy and peace, too, if only one feels within oneself a yearning corresponding to these three kinds of love. Of course that yearning does not come all too sudden nor without His grace. - Hence the necessity for daily efforts. Hence one must weep, too, to express one's yearnings. One should pray thus daily: Lord, have pity on me. I am only an ordinary man. It is beyond my power to obtain your vision unless you yourself choose to grant it out of your mercy. Be kind to me. Be kind to me, O Lord. Be kind to this weak one. The more you weep for Him, the more will your mind be cleansed of all that is dross in it. And in the mind thus cleansed, God will reveal Himself. For His sake you have embraced the monastic life; for His sake you have left home and hearth. So you surely

<sup>1</sup> Lit., a great soul. Swami Vivekananda gave this name to Swami Shivananda in appreciation of his some exceptional virtues.

<sup>2</sup> A term of respect referring to Guru or God.  
Here Sri Ramakrishna.

have claims on Him. Press hard your claims, taking Him to be one of your own. Why has He snatched you away from your parents? Why has He taken you under His care and given you a place in His Order? Just because He means to be kind to you. So lie down at His door throwing yourself completely on His mercy. Follow the advice Pāvhāri Baba gave to Swamiji: Lie down at your Guru's door as a dog does at its master's. Swamiji often repeated this advice to us, too. Just as a dog never leaves its master's house even if it does not get food or even if it is beaten or otherwise ill-treated, so shall we also stick to our Master's place, steadfast in our loyalty and depending absolutely upon His mercy. No matter what sort of experience we have—sweet or bitter, we must stick to Him at all costs. He who will do so to the end, will win. What have you to worry about? You are under Thakur's protection, you have got a place in His Order. Thakur used to say, "when a father holds his boy by the hand, the boy has no fear of falling". Similarly, so long as you are in this Order, under His care, you have no fear. Thakur will certainly save you. Rest assured of this. True, you have not seen Sri Ramakrishna. But you see us, His children. You hear of Him from us. It is no small luck. You are indeed very fortunate. The next generation will not be able to see us even. That is why Swamiji has founded this Order. In the form of this Order Thakur will go on functioning for many centuries to come. From now on He will work through the medium of this Order. Bear this in mind always: loyalty to the Order is loyalty to Thakur. To obey the Order is to obey Thakur. At his bidding Swamiji founded this Order. And all we say we say for the good of the world, for your good, too. Be sure we are not come to deceive. What is true we say—nothing but that. They are all progressing daily—those who are here. You, too, are progressing. Just believe this—our Thakur is ever merciful to those who seek refuge unto Him. He protects in every way those who sincerely seek

His protection. Throwing aside all love for sense-objects, you have come here to realize God, to get peace. Leave everything to Him, depend on Him absolutely. He will surely do what is good for you, He will surely grant you peace. All you need to do is to obey His commands, to tread the path chalked out by Him. You are monks; keep aloof particularly from woman and gold. "Purity and straight-forwardness"—this is your motto. Thakur is ready to forgive everything but not "fraud in the matter of thoughts". He does not keep them in this Order, removes them from it—those who accept thoughts alien to His or play fast and loose in any matter. Only the sincere shall have a place here.'

Monk: Bless me that I may stick to Thakur's place. And, Maharaj, often all sorts of evil thoughts come to the mind. They are so disturbing. Please advise what I should do about them.

Mahapurush Maharaj (with great affection): Oh, yes, my son, you have all my blessings. May your birth as man be blessed through your stay in this Order of Thakur's. As for those evil thoughts, don't take much notice of them. You surely know, don't you. Thakur is the living embodiment of purity? Contemplate His divine figure and repeat His holy name. All evil thoughts will then hang down their heads with shame, as it were. They will not be strong again. Whenever an evil thought will arise in the mind, pray with tears in your eyes: Lord, I am a mere weakling. Please protect me. Who else will, if you don't? Am I not your slave living under your care? Pray like that. And then only will He listen. You are an early riser, aren't you? Rise very early. Don't sleep after three or four in the morning. How can a monk sleep after that? Eat little at night. If you do, you will see you will wake up at three or half-past three and will feel refreshed, too. Thakur used to say, "the night meal should be like a refreshment". We too take very little at night. This has been our habit from the time we used to visit Thakur.

## MY MISSION\*

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

. Now, ladies and gentlemen, the subject for this morning was to have been the Vedanta Philosophy. That subject itself is interesting, but rather dry and very vast.

Meanwhile, I have been asked by your president and some of the ladies and gentlemen here to tell them something about my work and what I have been doing. It may be interesting to some here, but not so much so to me. In fact, I don't quite know how to tell it to you, for this will have been the first time in my life that I have spoken on that subject.

Now, to understand what I have been trying to do, in my small way, I will take you, in imagination, to India. We have not time to go into all the details and all the ramifications of the subject; nor is it possible for you to understand all the complexities in a foreign race, in this short time. Suffice it to say, I will at least try to give you a little picture of what India is like.

It is like a gigantic building all tumbled down, in ruins. At first sight, then, there is little hope. It is a nation gone and ruined. But you wait and study, then you see something beyond that. The truth is that so long as the principle, the ideal, of which the outer man is the expression, is not hurt or destroyed, the man lives, and there is hope for that man. If your coat is stolen twenty times, that is no reason why you should be destroyed. You can get a new coat. The coat is unessential. The fact that a rich man is robbed does not hurt the vitality of the man, does not mean death. The man will survive.

Standing on this principle, we look in and we see--what? India is no longer a political power; it is an enslaved race. Indians have no say, no voice in their own government; they are three hundred millions of slaves--nothing more! The average income of a man in India is two shillings a month. The common state of the vast mass of the people is starvation, so that, with the least decrease in income, millions die. A little famine means death. So there, too, when I look on

that side of India, I see ruin--hopeless ruin.

But we find that the Indian race never stood for wealth. Although they acquired immense wealth, perhaps more than any other nation ever acquired, yet the nation did not stand for wealth. It was a powerful race for ages, yet we find that that nation never stood for power, never went out of the country to conquer. Quite content within their own boundaries, they never fought anybody. The Indian nation never stood for imperial glory. Wealth and power, then, were not the ideals of the race.

What then? Whether they were wrong or right--that is not the question we discuss

that nation, among all the children of men, has believed, and believed intensely, that this life is not real. The real is God; and they must cling unto that God, through thick and thin. In the midst of their degradation, religion came first. The Hindu man drinks religiously, sleeps religiously, walks religiously, marries religiously, robs religiously.

Did you ever see such a country? If you want to get up a gang of robbers, the leader will have to preach some sort of religion, then formulate some bogus metaphysics, and say that this method is the clearest and quickest way to get to God. Then he finds a following. Otherwise, not. That shows that the vitality of the race, the mission of the race is religion; and because that has not been touched, therefore that race lives.

See Rome. Rome's mission was imperial power, expansion. And as soon as that was touched, Rome fell to pieces, passed out. The mission of Greece was intellect, as soon as that was touched, why, Greece passed out. So in modern times, Spain, and all these modern countries. Each nation has a mission for the world. So long as that mission is not hurt, that nation lives, despite every difficulty. But as soon as its mission is destroyed, the nation collapses.

Now, that vitality of India has not been

\* Reprint of *An Unpublished Lecture*, by Swami Vivekananda, from *Vedanta and the West*, July-August, 1944.

touched yet. They have not given up that, and it is still strong—in spite of all their superstitions. Hideous superstitions are there, most revolting, some of them—never mind. The national life-current is still there—the mission of the race.

The Indian nation never will be a powerful, conquering people—never. They will never be a great political power; that is not their business, that is not the note India has to play in the great harmony of nations. But what has she to play? God, and God alone. She clings unto that like grim death. Still there is hope there.

So then, after your analysis, you come to the conclusion that all these things, all this poverty and misery, are of no consequence—the man is living still, and therefore there is hope.

Well! You see religious activities going on all through the country. I don't recall a year that has not given birth to several new sects in India. The stronger the current, the more the whirlpools and eddies. Sects are not signs of decay, they are a sign of life. Let sects multiply, till the time comes when every one of us is a sect, each individual. We need not quarrel about that.

Now, take your country. (I don't mean any criticism.) Here the social laws, the political formation, everything, is made to facilitate man's journey in this life. He may live very happily so long as he is on this earth. Look at your streets—how clean! Your beautiful cities! And in how many ways a man can make money! How many channels to get enjoyment in this life! But, if a man here should say, "Now look here, I shall sit down under this tree and meditate; I don't want to work," why, he would have to go to jail. See? There would be no chance for him at all. None. A man can live in this society only if he falls in line. He has to join in this rush for the enjoyment of good in this life, or he dies.

Now let us go back to India. There, if a man says, "I shall go and sit on the top of that mountain and look at the tip of my nose all the rest of my days," everybody says, "Go, and God speed to you!" He need not speak a word. Somebody brings him a little cloth, and he is all right. But if a man says, "Behold, I am going to enjoy a little of this life," every door is closed to him.

I say that the ideas of both countries are unjust. I see no reason why a man here should not sit down and look at the tip of his nose if he likes. Why should everybody here do just what the majority here does? I see no reason.

Nor why, in India, a man should not have the goods of this life and make money. But you see how those vast millions are forced to accept the opposite point of view by tyranny. This is the tyranny of the sages. This is the tyranny of the great, tyranny of the spiritual, tyranny of the intellectual, tyranny of the wise. And the tyranny of the wise, mind you, is much more powerful than the tyranny of the ignorant. The wise, the intellectual, when they take to forcing their opinions upon others, know a hundred thousand ways to make bonds and barriers which it is not in the power of the ignorant to break.

Now, I say that this thing has got to stop. There is no use in sacrificing millions and millions of people to produce one spiritual giant. If it is possible to make a society where the spiritual giant will be produced and all the rest of the people will be happy, as well, that is good; but if the millions have to be ground down, that is unjust. Better that the one great man should suffer for the salvation of the world.

In every nation you will have to work through their methods. To every man you will have to speak in his own language. Now, in England or in America, if you want to preach religion to them, you will have to work through political methods—make organizations, societies, with voting, balloting, a president, and so on, because that is the language, the method of the Western race. On the other hand, if you want to speak of polities in India, you must speak through the language of religion. You will have to tell them something like this: "The man who cleans his house every morning will acquire such and such an amount of merit, he will go to heaven, or he comes to God." Unless you put it that way, they won't listen to you. It is a question of language. The thing done is the same. But with every race, you will have to speak their language, in order to reach their hearts. And that is quite just. We need not fret about that.

In the Order to which I belong we are called Sannyasins. The word means, "a

man who has renounced." This is a very, very, very ancient Order. Even Buddha, who was 500 years before Christ, belonged to that Order. He was one of the reformers of his Order. That was all. So ancient! You find it mentioned away back in the Vedas, the oldest book in the world. In old India there was the regulation that every man and woman, towards the end of their lives, must get out of social life altogether and think of nothing except God and their own salvation. This was to get ready for the great event - death. So old people used to become Sannyasins in those early days. Later on, young people began to give up the world. And young people are active. They could not sit down under a tree and think all the time of their own death, so they went about preaching and starting sects, and so on. Thus, Buddha, being young, started that great reform. Had he been an old man, he would have looked at the tip of his nose and died quietly.

The Order is not a church and the people who join the Order are not priests. There is an absolute difference between the priests and the Sannyasins. In India, priesthood, like every other business in a social life, is a hereditary profession. A priest's son will become a priest, just as a carpenter's son will be a carpenter, or a blacksmith's son a blacksmith. The priest must always be married. The Hindu does not think a man is complete unless he has a wife. An unmarried man has no right to perform religious ceremonies.

The Sannyasins don't possess property, and they do not marry. Beyond that there is no organization. The only bond that is there is the bond between the teacher and the taught—and that is peculiar to India. The teacher is not a man who comes just to teach me and I pay him so much and there it ends. In India it is really like an adoption. The teacher is more than my own father, and I am truly his child, his son in every respect. I owe him obedience and reverence, first, before my own father, even; because, they say, the father gave me this body, but he showed me the way to salvation, he is greater than father. And we carry this love, this respect for our teacher all our lives. And that is the only organization that exists. I adopt my disciples. Sometimes the teacher will be a young man and the disciple a very

old man. But never mind, he is the son and he calls me "Father" and I have to address him as my son, my daughter, and so on.

Now, I happened to get an old man to teach me, and he was very peculiar. He did not go much for intellectual scholarship, scarcely studied books; but when he was a boy he was seized with the tremendous idea of getting truth direct. First he tried by studying his own religion. Then he got the idea that he must get the truth of other religions; and with that idea he joined all the sects, one after the other. For the time being, he did exactly what they told him to do—lived with the devotees of these different sects in turn, until interpenetrated with the particular ideal of that sect. After a few years he would go to another sect. When he had gone through with all that, he came to the conclusion that they were all good. He had no criticism to offer to any one; they are all so many paths leading to the same goal. And then he said: "That is a glorious thing, that there should be so many paths, because if there were only one path, perhaps it would suit only an individual man. The more the number of paths, the more the chance for every one of us to know the truth. If I cannot be taught in one language, I will try another, and so on." Thus his benediction was for every religion.

Now, all the ideas that I preach are only an attempt to echo his ideas. Nothing is mine originally except the wicked ones, everything I say which is false and wicked. But every word that I have ever uttered which is true and good, is simply an attempt to echo his voice. Read his life by Prof. Max Muller.

Well, there at his feet I conceived these ideas. There, with some other young men. I was just a boy. I went there when I was about sixteen. Some of the other boys were still younger, some a little older—about a dozen or more. And together we conceived that this ideal had to be spread. And not only spread, but made practical. That is to say, we must show the spirituality of the Hindus, the mercifulness of the Buddhists, the activity of the Christians, the brotherhood of the Mohammedans, by our practical lives. "We shall start a universal religion now and here," we said. "We will not wait."

Our teacher was an old man who would never touch a coin with his hands. He took just the little food offered, just so many yards of cotton cloth, no more. He could never be induced to take any other gift. With all these marvellous ideas, he was strict, because that made him free. The monk in India is the friend of the prince today, dines with him; and tomorrow he is with the beggar, sleeps under a tree. He must come into contact with everyone, must always move about. As the saying is, "The rolling stone gathers no moss." The last fourteen years of my life, I have never been for three months at a time in any one place—continually rolling. So do we all.

Now, this handful of boys got hold of these ideas, and all the practical results that sprang out of these ideas. Universal religion, great sympathy for the poor, and all that, are very good in theory, but one must practise.

Then came the sad day when our old teacher died. We nursed him the best we could. We had no friends. Who would listen to a few boys, with their crank notions? Nobody. At least, in India, boys are nobodies. Just think of it--a dozen boys, telling people vast, big ideas, saying they are determined to work these ideas out in life. Why, everybody laughed. From laughter, it became serious; it became persecution. Why, the parents of the boys came to feel like spanking every one of us. And the more we were derided, the more determined we became.

Then came a terrible time for me personally and for all the other boys as well. But to me came such misfortune! On the one side was my mother, my brothers. My father died at that time, and we were left poor. Oh, very poor, almost starving all the time. I was the only hope of the family, the only one who could do anything to help them. I had to stand between my two worlds. On the one hand, I would have to see my mother and brothers starve unto death; on the other, I had believed that this man's ideas were for the good of India and the world, and had to be preached and worked out. And so the fight went on in my mind for days and months. Sometimes I would pray for five or six days and nights together, without stopping. Oh, the agony of those days! I was living in hell! The natural affections of my

boy's heart drawing me to my family—I could not bear to see those who were the nearest and dearest to me suffering. On the other hand, nobody to sympathize with me. Who would sympathize with the imaginations of a boy? Imaginations that caused so much suffering to others! Who would sympathize with me? None—except one.

That one's sympathy brought blessing and hope. She was a woman. Our teacher, this great monk, was married when he was a boy, a mere child. When he became a young man, and all this religious zeal was upon him, he came to see his wife. Although they had been married as children, they had not seen very much of each other until they were grown up. Then he came to his wife and said: "Behold, I am your husband; you have a right to this body. But I cannot live the sex life, although I have married you. I leave it to your judgment." And she wept and said: "God speed you! The Lord bless you! Am I the woman to degrade you? If I can, I will help you. Go on in your work."

That was the woman. The husband went on and became a monk, in his own way; and from a distance the wife went on helping as much as she could. And later, when the man had become a great spiritual giant, she came—really, she was the first disciple—and she spent the rest of her life taking care of the body of this man. He never knew whether he was living or dying, or anything. Sometimes, when talking, he would get so excited that if he sat on live charcoal he did not know it. Live charcoal! Forgetting all about his body, all the time.

Well, that lady, his wife, was the only one who sympathized with the idea of those boys. But she was powerless. She was poorer than we were. Never mind! We plunged into the breach. I believed, as I was living, that these ideas were going to rationalize India and bring better days to many lands and foreign races. With that belief, came the realization that it is better that a few persons suffer than that such ideas should die out of the world. What if a mother or two brothers die? It is a sacrifice. Let it be done. No great thing can be done without sacrifice. The heart must be plucked out and the bleeding heart placed upon the altar. Then great things are done. Is there any other way? None have found it. I appeal to each one of you, to those who,

have accomplished any great thing. Oh, how much it has cost! What agony! What torture! What terrible suffering is behind every deed of success, in every life. You know that, all of you.

And thus we went on, that band of boys. The only thing we got from those around us was a kick and a curse—that was all. Of course, we had to beg from door to door for our food—got hips and haws—the refuse of everything. A piece of bread here and there. We got hold of a broken-down old house, with hissing cobras living underneath; and, because that was the cheapest, we went into that house and lived there.

Thus we went on for some years, in the meanwhile making excursions all over India, trying to bring about the idea gradually. Ten years were spent without a ray of light! Ten more years! A thousand times despondency came; but there was one thing always to keep us hopeful—the tremendous faithfulness to each other, the tremendous love between us. I have got a hundred men and women around me: if I become the devil himself tomorrow, they will say, "Here we are still! We'll never give you up!" That is a great blessing. In happiness, in misery, in famine, in pain, in the grave, in heaven or in hell, he who never gives me up is my friend. Is such friendship a joke? A man may have salvation through such friendship. That brings salvation, if we can love like that. If we have that faithfulness, why, there is the essence of all concentration. You need not worship any gods in the world if you have that faith, that strength, that love. And that was there with us all throughout that hard time. That was there. That made us go from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, from the Indus to Brahmapootra.

This band of boys began to travel about. Gradually we began to draw attention: ninety per cent was antagonism, very little of it was helpful. For we had one fault: we were boys—in poverty and with all the roughness of boys. He who has to make his own way in life is a bit rough, he has not much time to be smooth and suave and polite—"my lady and my gentleman," and all that. You have seen that in life, always. He is a rough diamond, he has not much polish, he is a jewel in an indifferent casket.

And there we were. "No compromise!" was the watchword. "This is the ideal and

this has got to be carried out. If we meet the king, though we die, we must give him a bit of our minds; if the peasant, the same." Naturally, we met with antagonism.

But, mind you, this is life's experience: if you really want the good of others, the whole universe may stand against you and cannot hurt you. It must crumble before your power of the Lord Himself in you, if you are sincere and really unselfish. And those boys were that. They came as children, pure and fresh from the hands of nature. Said our Master: "I want to offer at the altar of the Lord only those flowers that have not even been smelled, fruits that have not been touched with the fingers." The words of the great man sustained us all. For he saw through the future life of those boys that he collected from the streets of Calcutta, so to say. People used to laugh at him when he said: "You will see—this boy, that boy, what he becomes." His faith was unalterable. "Mother showed it to me. I may be weak, but when She says this is so—She can never make mistakes—it must be so."

So things went on and on for ten years without any light, but with my health breaking all the time. It tells on the body in the long run: sometimes one meal at nine in the evening, another time a meal at eight in the morning, another after two days, another after three days—and always the poorest and roughest thing. Who is going to give to the beggar the good things he has? And then, they have not much in India. And most of the time walking, climbing snow peaks, sometimes ten miles of hard mountain climbing, just to get a meal. They eat unleavened bread in India, and sometimes they have it stored away for twenty or thirty days, until it is harder than bricks; and then they will give a square of that. I would have to go from house to house to collect sufficient for one meal. And then the bread was so hard, it made my mouth bleed to eat it. Literally, you can break your teeth on that bread. Then I would put it in a pot and pour over it water from the river. For months and months I existed that way—of course it was telling on the health.

Then I thought, I have tried India; it is time for me to try another country. At that time your Parliament of Religions was to be held, and someone was to be sent from India. I was just a vagabond, but I said, "If you

send me, I am going. I have not much to lose, and I don't care if I lose that." It was very difficult to find the money, but after a long struggle they got together just enough to pay for my passage and I came. Came one or two months early, so that I found myself drifting about in the streets here, without knowing anybody.

But finally the Parliament of Religions opened and I met kind friends, who helped me right along. I worked a little, collected funds, started two papers, and so on. After that I went over to England and worked there. At the same time I carried on the work for India in America, too.

My plan for India, as it has been developed and centralized, is this: I have told you of our lives as monks there, how we go from door to door, so that religion is brought to everybody without charge, except, perhaps, a broken piece of bread. That is why you see the lowest of the low in India holding the most exalted religious ideas. It is all through the work of these monks. But ask a man, "Who are the English?"—he does not know. He says perhaps, "They are the children of those giants they speak of in those books, are they not?" "Who governs you?" "We don't know". "What is the government?" They don't know. But they know philosophy. It is a practical want of intellectual education about life on this earth they suffer from. These millions and millions of people are ready for life beyond this world—is not that enough for them? Certainly not. They must have a better piece of bread and a better piece of rag on their bodies. The great question is, how to get that better bread and better rag for these sunken millions.

First, I must tell you, there is great hope for them, because, you see, they are the gentlest people on earth. Not that they are timid. When they want to fight, they fight like demons. The best soldiers the English have are recruited from the peasantry of India. Death is a thing of no importance to them. Their attitude is, "Twenty times I have died before, and I shall die many times after this. What of that?" They never turn back. They are not given to much emotion, but they make very good fighters.

Their instinct, however, is to plow. If you rob them, murder them, tax them, do anything to them, they will be quiet and gentle, so long as you leave them free to practise

their religion. They never interfere with the religion of others. "Leave us liberty to worship our gods, and take everything else!" That is their attitude. When the English touch them there, trouble starts. That was the real cause of the '57 mutiny—they would not bear religious repression. The great Mohammedan governments were simply blown up because they touched the Indians' religion.

But aside from that, they are very peaceful, very quiet, very gentle, and, above all, not given to vice. The absence of any strong drink, oh, it makes them infinitely superior to the mobs of any other country. You cannot compare the decency of life among the poor in India with life in the slums here. A slum means poverty, but poverty does not mean sin, indecency, and vice in India. In other countries, the opportunities are such that only the indecent and the lazy need be poor. There is no reason for poverty unless one is a fool or a blackguard—the sort who want city life and all its luxuries. They won't go into the country. They say, "We are here with all the fun, and you must give us bread." But that is not the case in India, where the poor fellows work hard from morning to sunset, and somebody else takes the bread out of their hands, and their children go hungry. Notwithstanding the millions of tons of wheat raised in India, scarcely a grain passes the mouth of a peasant. He lives upon the poorest corn, which you would not feed to your canary birds.

Now there is no reason why they should suffer such distress—these people; oh, so pure and good! We hear so much talk about the sunken millions, and the degraded women of India—but none come to our help. What do they say? They say: "You can only be helped, you can only be good by ceasing to be what you are. It is useless to help Hindus." These people do not know the history of races. There will be no more India if they change their religion and their institutions, because that is the vitality of that race. It will disappear, so, really, you will have nobody to help.

Then there is the other great point to learn: that you can never help, really. What can we do for each other? You are growing in your own life, I am growing in my own. It is possible that I can give you a push in your life, knowing that, in the long run, all roads

lead to Rome. It is a steady growth. No national civilization is perfect, yet. Give that civilization a push, and it will arrive at its own goal: don't strive to change it. Take away a nation's institutions, customs and manners, and what will be left? They hold the nation together.

• But here comes the very learned foreign man, and he says: "Look here: you give up all those institutions and customs of thousands of years, and take my tom-fool tin pot and be happy." This is all nonsense.

We will have to help each other, but we have to go one step farther: the first thing is to become unselfish in help. "If you do just what I tell you to do, I will help you. Otherwise not." Is that help?

And so, if the Hindus want to help you spiritually, there will be no question of limitations: perfect unselfishness. I give, and there it ends. It is gone from me. My mind, my powers, my everything that I have to give, is given: given with the idea to give, and no more. I have seen many times people who have robbed half the world, and they gave \$20,000 "to convert the heathen." What for? For the benefit of the heathen, or for their own souls? Just think of that.

And the Nemesis of crime is working. We men try to hoodwink our own eyes. But inside the heart, He has remained, the real Self. He never forgets. We can never delude Him. His eyes will never be hood-

winked. Whenever there is any impulse of real charity, it tells, though it be at the end of a thousand years. Obstructed, it yet wakens, once more to burst like a thunder-bolt. And every impulse where the motive is selfish, self-seeking—though it may be launched forth with all the newspapers blazoning, all the mobs standing and cheering—it fails to reach the mark.

I am not taking pride in this. But, mark you, I have told the story of that group of boys. Today there is not a village, not a man, not a woman in India that does not know their work and bless them. There is not a famine in the land where these boys do not plunge in and try to work and rescue as many as they can. And that strikes to the heart. The people come to know it. So help whenever you can, but mind what your motive is. If it is selfish, it will neither benefit those you help, nor yourself. If it is unselfish, it will bring blessings upon them to whom it is given, and infinite blessings upon you, sure as you are living. The Lord can never be hoodwinked. The law of Karma can never be hoodwinked.

(This hitherto unpublished lecture was delivered by Swami Vivekananda to the Shakespeare Club of Pasadena, California, on January 27, 1900. It was recorded in a notebook which has recently been given to the Editors by Mrs. Ida Herman, a personal friend of the Swami. Although this transcription was unedited, it has been thought best to make as few cuts and alterations as possible—in order to preserve the charm and force of Vivekananda's personality.)

## THE TASK BEFORE US

BY THE EDITOR

### I

We offer our hearty New Year Greetings to all our friends.

With this number, the *Prabuddha Bharata* enters its fiftieth year of existence in its service of India and the world. For a monthly publication in India, and especially in a foreign language like English, this is a long life, and the retrospect may well fill us with courage and hope that the *Prabuddha Bharata* has still a long and useful career in its continued search for Truth, and the upholding of it before the educated classes

in India and the world till, to quote the Swami Vivekananda,

Before thy gentle voice serene, behold how  
Visions melt, and fold after fold of dreams  
Departs to void, till Truth and Truth alone,  
In all its glory shines.

In July, 1896, the Swami Vivekananda wrote with regard to the conduct of the journal, 'Be obedient and eternally faithful to the cause of truth, humanity, and your country, and you will move the world. Remember it is the person,—the life which is the secret of power, nothing else. . . .'

Again in August, 1898, in an inspired poem to the Prabuddha Bharata, he thus visualized the task before the journal: -

And tell the world -

Awake, arise, dream no more!  
This is the land of dreams, where Karma  
Weaves unthreaded garlands with our thoughts,  
Of flowers sweet or noxious, -and none  
Has root or stem, being born in naught, which  
The softest breath of Truth drives back to  
Primal nothingness. Be bold, and face  
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease,  
Or, if you cannot, dream then truer dreams,  
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

What the Prabuddha Bharata during the period of its existence so far has accomplished, and what it has failed to accomplish, we would rather leave to our friends and critics to determine. But this much we may claim. The prestige of this 'heathen' nation has been raised abroad among many broad-minded and educated people. The people of India have been filled with the hope of being able to prove themselves in the future worthy heirs of their glorious past. It has put a severe break on the patronizing and proud movements from Western priests, preachers and politicians to save the body and the soul of India despite the Indians themselves.

## II

The search for Truth is by no means a safe occupation. Every important truth discovered and published has roused the anger and opposition of those to whom it means the painful death of some fond illusion. Thus, in the sphere of religion, look at the, now to us, silly and cruel opposition of the Christian Church to the Copernican Theory, because certain passages in the Bible were against the new astronomical view of the Solar system, and how it turned the machinery of the Inquisition upon Galileo, the great astronomer and scientist, and under the menace of torture forced the learned scientist to abjure his belief that the earth moves round the sun! Giordano Bruno, another great Italian philosopher, mystic and scientist, likewise fell into the clutches of the Inquisition and was imprisoned for several years, and finally burned to leath because he rejected the Aristotelian astronomy for that of Copernicus which allowed for the possibility of innumerable worlds! Bruno was, in the eyes of the Inquisition further

guilty of heresy, for in his book *Spaccio* he 'exalts truth, prudence, wisdom, law and judgment, and at the same time scoffs at the mysteries of Christian faith, and places the Jewish record on a level with the Greek myths', and because he asserted (what many phases of Indian thought have done from time immemorial) that 'amid all the varying phenomenon of the universe, there is something which gives coherence and intelligibility to them and this something is god, the universal unifying substance from which all things come of necessity. As a manifestation of God the universe must be infinite and animated, but being itself difficult to comprehend, it gives no true knowledge of God, who is far removed from His effects. As the unity in all things, God may be called the *monas monadum*, every other thing being like a *monas* or self-existent, living nature, a universe in itself. The human soul is a thinking monad whose highest function is the contemplation of the Divine Unity and whose destiny is immortality as a portion of the Divine Life.' (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

Or again, to take an illustration from everyday life in India, see how misguided Mussalmans would slaughter Hindus for playing music before their mosques, or how equally misguided Hindus would belabour Mussalmans because they kill the sacred cow! All this is done in the defence of religious truth! Again look at the inhuman ostracism of the untouchables and lower castes by high caste Hindus, all sincerely done on the plea of preserving a spurious spiritual purity based upon local prejudices and customs, with regard to matters of food and drink. Protest against such iniquities and you will raise a hornet's nest round your ears.

In the field of politics and economics many such examples of selfish interests, individual, class, or racial, -sailing under the flag of Truth in grandiose guises, will readily occur to the minds of our readers. Thus the English-speaking peoples are ostensibly fighting for freedom and democracy in the world, but American critics point out that England must shed her political imperialism, while English critics point out that the Americans should not try to substitute English political imperialism in the world by the imperialism of the American dollar! The monied magnates of the world gloss over their exploitation of

the labouring classes by pointing out that but for their capital and their business brains, none of the present-day glories of civilization would be possible, and the masses would have to revert to the drab and dreary rural economies of the middle ages, if not forced into actual starvation consequent upon the increasing population among the poorer classes of the world.

In all ages and climes this warfare between truth and untruth, knowledge and ignorance, liberty and tyranny, the privileged and the unprivileged, has been going on in various guises and in various ways. 'Save to the eye of faith the universe displays a dual personality, kindly and cruel, philanthropic and inhuman. If God is in evidence, Satan is also in evidence. Ormuz and Ahriman are in array against each other, the powers of light and darkness, of organisation and disorganisation, construction and destruction, health and disease, life and death'. (The Human Situation, by W. M. Dixon). Those who take the side of truth and liberty against falsehood and tyranny, as they conceive it, have, however, the support of the best thought of the world in their favour. The Upanishads have declared in no uncertain terms, "Truth alone triumphs, not untruth". The Gita says that God Himself comes down on earth as incarnations to secure the triumph of Truth over untruth. But the seeker of Truth should not have any pusillanimous hankering for being rewarded liberally for his espousal of the cause of Truth. Truth for truth's sake should be his ideal. There are good pious people who think it is possible to have in this world good alone without evil, pleasure alone without pain.

The flesh craves for pleasure,  
The senses for sweet strains of song,  
The mind for peals of laughter,  
The heart pants to reach beyond sorrow ;  
Who cares exchange the soothing moonlight  
For the burning rays of the noon-tide sun?  
The wretch with a scorching heart  
Even he loves the sweet moon ;  
All thirst for joy.—Vivekananda.

And this thirst for joy makes us fondly dream of a world where all is joy and happiness, of a heaven where there is no more sorrow. The seeker after truth, however, must accept Kali, the Mother, both in her All-Merciful as well as terrible aspect. He must count labour and suffering and service

sweet instead of bitter. He should not shrink from defeat nor embrace despair. He must look for no mercy for himself if he would be 'the bearer of great vessels of mercy to others'.

### III

This unending adventure of the search after Truth, and the advocacy of its practical application in the various fields of human life is the task to which the Prabuddha Bharata has dedicated itself. It shall be our aim and constant endeavour to place before our readers, firstly, all the truths discovered by the greatest minds of the world (irrespective of what race or religion they belong to) which will uplift the individual man and woman, and help them to make the best of their natural gifts of mind and body. Secondly, it shall be the special care of the Prabuddha Bharata to see that it justifies its name by assisting towards a greater awakening of all classes in India from their age-long slumber in selfishness and ignorance, and incessantly calling to them to rise to the occasion, and make of their country, by love and unity among themselves once more a powerful, wise, and beneficent factor in the onward evolution of all humanity. Thirdly, both in individual and in national life in India, we shall plead with all the strength at our command for a vigorous but enlightened support for 'the ideals, for society and for the individual, which were originally formulated three thousand years ago in Asia, and which those who have not broken with the tradition of civilization still accept'. (Ends and Means by Aldous Huxley). Lastly we shall show scant sympathy for all thoughts and activities of individuals or organisations which indulge in fanaticism, persecution and the suppression or distortion of truth in defence of untenable privileges. Following the advice of Sri Krishna to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita we shall call upon all to fight the battle of life bravely like heroes, to whom victory and defeat are alike welcome, provided they can have the inner satisfaction of having done their best in the righteous fight.

Let us make this last point a little clearer, as it bears vitally upon human conduct. Sri Krishna's advice to Arjuna is the eternal message of the Divine to each individual, group, or nation to resist the siren voice of defeatism and cowardice masquerading under

the cloak of pity, tender-heartedness and virtue.

Arjuna, whose side had been unjustly despoiled of all their rights and insulted in various inhuman ways by Duryodhana, had, out of sheer self-respect, to declare war upon the Kauravas, yet strange to say this victor of a thousand fights exhibits a pusillanimous tender-heartedness and a virtuous horror of fighting his old friends, now his enemies. The horrors of war, the doubtfulness of victory, the fear of falling into Hell--these make him a faint-heart, and he is willing to be oppressed, and insulted, willing to allow wickedness and untruth triumph. And he, a warrior sworn to uphold the right and punish the wicked and the unjust! Instead of the Kshatriya's motto of "Death before dishonour", he would prefer dishonour and ignoble slavery rather than face or inflict death. This is the treacherous slough of despond into which individuals, communities and nations sink imperceptibly when they try to escape from their obvious and honourable duties as human beings. They forget that the more we kow-tow to the forces of untruth, tyranny and evil, the greater is the benumbing grasp of those forces over us. The brute forces must be faced at the outset itself whatever the cost or we are lost irretrievably. We must never forget that shirking our manifest duties will never give us salvation. So long as we feel the reality of the outside world, so long as our hearts are filled with love and hate, pleasure and pain, so long as we feel a sense of right and wrong, so long as we retain the slightest sense of personal responsibility, there is no way out except by facing honourably the dangers and difficulties that will inevitably befall all of us in this world of duality. It is all hypocrisy to talk of love, compassion and non-violence for your opponent, when in your heart of hearts the fires of hatred, ill-will and anger are smouldering, but without the power to flame up. So

Sri Krishna lays bare Arjuna's motives, and weans him away from the futile policy of defeatism and retreat, of escaping from the world's prize-fights by dubbing them coarse and vulgar, of passivity and surrender, and steels his heart with the saving doctrine of enlightened, disinterested activity for battling manfully in the cause of justice and righteousness against untruth, injustice, oppression, and dishonour. It is to this lesson of enlightened active participation like a free soul whether in the field of thought or action that we call the earnest attention of every Indian. Sri Krishna's message may be expressed in the one pronouncement, "Quit ye like men".

"And how are we to quit us like men? By never sitting down short of the goal. By aspiring to the front on the field of battle, and the back in the durbar. By struggle, struggle, struggle, within and without. Above all, by every form of self-mastery and self-direction. There is no tool that we must not try to wield, no weapon that we can be content to leave to others. In every field we must enter into the world-struggle. And we must aim at defeating every competitor. The New Learning is ours, no less than other men's. The search for truth is ours, and we are as well equipped for it as any. Civic integrity is ours. We have only to demonstrate it. Honour is ours. We have only to carry it into places new and strange. . . .

"But to realize the ideal that these words call up before us, we must struggle for education of all kinds, as captives for air, as the famine-stricken for food. We must capture for ourselves the means of a fair struggle, and then, turn on us all the whiteness of your searchlights, oh ye tests of modern progress! Ye shall not find the children of India shrink from the fierceness of your glow!"

These striking words of the Sister Nivedita, written thirty years ago, beckon us yet to our goal.

## UPANISHADIC MEDITATION

BY SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA

### *Upasana in Everyday Life*

When one proposes to write anything about the Upanishads, people get scared, and more so when one proposes to deal with

any special phase of the Upanishadic teachings such as *upasana* which is roughly translated as meditation. This is natural, for the Hindus have long given up studying their

own scriptures even of later origin, not to speak of the Upanishads which are considered full of mystic sayings of a bygone age and which are not in touch with our work-a-day life. For this prejudice against the Upanishads our scholars are not a little responsible. In speaking of the Vedas and the Upanishads they refer mostly to the *Jnâna-kânda* and the *Karma-kânda*—the portion dealing with knowledge and the portion dealing with sacrifices, etc. Now, truth to say, modern India is interested in neither of these. The old sacrifices can never be revived now, and knowledge in the Vedantic sense is only for the select few. For everyday life, it is assumed, as a consequence, that the Vedas have no message. The Upanishads are the concerns of the monks and philosophers and the *saṃhitâs* of the scholars and antiquarians. Our endeavour here will be to show that these two alternatives do not exhaust between themselves all the possibilities and implications of the Upanishadic teachings.

It is true that from the philosophical standpoint the Vedic teachings naturally divide themselves into the well-known sections on *jñâna* and *karma*. But from the practical point of view there is an intermediate section as well, which links up the two and shows how *karma* can be made a means of higher spiritual achievements and how everyday life can be refumed by the light of *jñâna* and may itself become a path of *sâdhanâ* or spiritual practice. This re-orientation of work-a-day life through its being impregnated by *jñâna*, was known to the Upanishadic seers, and this formed the background of the Upanishadic *upâsanâs*. The sages felt that life is not so simple an affair as to be divided into work and philosophy. Surely there should be an intermediate stage where philosophy gives the direction to action and where action prevents philosophy from vanishing into airy nothing. Surely there must be some regions in life where heaven and earth can meet. For our purpose, then, we shall divide the Vedic lore into three sections—*jñâna*, *upâsanâ*, and *karma*—knowledge, meditation, and action. In later days such a division of the Bhagavadgita was emphasized by Madhusudana Saraswati; only he substituted *bhakti*, devotion, in place of *upâsanâ* and said that according to the Gita plan of spiritual progress, performance of duty leads to *bhakti* and

*bhakti* leads to *jñâna*. Now, *bhakti* is in essence meditation made natural through combination with love for a Personal God. We shall see that this is what *upâsanâ* also means in essence. But the point we are considering here is that in the Gita scheme of *sâdhanâ* there is no necessary break in life's progress. It does not contemplate that a man should on a particular day give up all duties and become a *bhakta*, a devotee. On the contrary, it shows the possibility of life being inwardly transformed even when the outward garb remains the same all along. There are the instances of *râjarshis*, king-saints, like Janaka. Similarly the Upanishads insisted that life should not be degraded into mere routine; for, though work is noble and effective, it becomes nobler and more effective when intelligently directed and morally and spiritually transformed.<sup>1</sup>

Now, this path of inner transformation in the midst of outward conformity was worked out in all its philosophical bearings and practical details by men of action among whom were some Upanishadic *râjarshis* who were conscious of the efficacy of the path as well as of their monopoly of this. In the *Brihadâraṇyaka Upanishad*, King Pravâhana Jai-vali says to the Brahmin Gautama: 'Before this, this knowledge did not reside in any Brahmin.'<sup>2</sup> In the *Chhândooga Upanishad*, too, the same king says to Gautama, 'Before you, this knowledge reached no Brahmin, and hence in all the worlds the Kshatriyas had their supremacy.'<sup>3</sup>

In the Gita Shri Krishna says,

This indestructible Yoga I communicated to the (Being in the) Sun; the Sun transmitted it to Manu; Manu handed it over to Ikshvâku. Thus this ran along the line of the *râjarshis*. But in the course of ages it has been lost.

Yes, it belonged to men of action, and it ought to have been preached by a man of

<sup>1</sup> यदेव विद्या करोति अद्योपनिषदा तदेव बीर्यवत्तरं भवति—*Chh.*, I. i. 10.

<sup>2</sup> हयं विद्येतः पूर्वं न कस्मिंश्च ब्राह्मण उवास VI. ii. 8.

<sup>3</sup> हयं न त्वतः पुरा विद्या ब्राह्मणान् गच्छति तस्मात् सर्वे लोकेषु ज्ञत्रस्यैव प्रशासनमभूत्—V. iii. 7. Also cf. *ibid.*, III. xi. 4.

१ इमं विवस्वतं योगं प्रांक्तवानहमव्ययं ।  
विवस्वान्मनमेव प्राह मनुरित्वाकवेऽब्रवीत् ॥

२ एवं परंपरा प्राप्तमिमं राजर्णयो विदुः ।

३ स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परंतप ॥ IV. 1-2.

action. But as ill luck would have it, our men of action have lost the philosophy of action, and our philosophers have ignored all application of philosophy. How times have really changed!

To illustrate our point, let us cite some concrete examples from the Upanishadic texts. But before that we must mentally place ourselves in an altogether different environment. For, though we shall describe the *upásandas* connected with the daily life of the Upanishadic people, they will seem not only unfamiliar but sometimes queer also. Nevertheless, the stamp of 'practical Vedanta'—to use the well-known phrase of Swami Vivekananda—is written large on them, and even a passing glance will convince us of the realistic minds at work which did not deny the world as a mere chimera. They are full of hints and suggestions for those modern people who know how to apply the ancient technique in a changed social *milieu*.

The chanting of the Vedas was the daily duty of the students of those days. But lest it should degenerate into a mechanical process, the students were encouraged to add a little reflection in the form of *upásanā* to this routine work. The *Chhāndo ya Upani-shad* says, 'One should reflect on the *sáman* with which one would eulogize, on the *rik* on which the *sáman* rests, on the seer who saw the *rik* verse, and one should reflect on the deity which one would eulogize' (I. iii. 9). In the *Taittiriya Upanishad* we read of the *samhitopanishat* or the *upásanā* based on the conjunction of letters. It is thus:

We are asked to meditate on the four factors involved in pronouncing the words श्वेत्वा from five different points of view. The four factors are: (1) ए at the end of श्वेत्वा which is to be joined to (2) ए at the beginning of व्वा. The third factor is the ए which makes its appearance as a connecting link between श्वेत्वा and व्वा. For when we actually pronounce these words rapidly, we get श्वेत्वा and not simply श्वेत् and व्वा. The fourth factor is the interval between श्वे�त् and व्वा which is filled up by the emergent ए and where the two letters ए of श्वे�त् and ए of व्वा actually combine. Now think of the first factor ए as the earth, the second factor ए as the heaven, the third factor ए as air, and the fourth factor interval as sky, and you get one part of the fivefold *upásanā*; for in the intermediate space do the earth

and sky combine through the atmospheric medium. We are again asked to think of the first factor as the teacher imparting the Vedic lore; the second factor as the pupil; the knowledge imparted as the connecting link between the two; and the actual pronunciation as the field of this connection, for here the conjunction is actualized. Similarly too, the four factors may be looked on as the father, mother, their issue, and their marriage. The whole idea behind this fivefold meditation, of which we have given only three parts, is to draw the pupil's attention to the universal fact of four factors involved in all conjunctions. From the mere linking up of two letters the pupil is to be led to a vision of cosmic unity in diversity. The pupil is taught not to rest satisfied with partial views but to expand his intellect to the furthest point it can reach. His imagination is to have the widest play though not at the expense of basic truths. Furthermore, he is encouraged to exercise his will: he is asked not only to have a mental picture, but to concentrate on it till it vibrates with life and light.

Take another example of *upásanā* from everyday life which aims at self-integration. Our difficulties in life arise very often from irreconcilability of interests. The different senses pull their weight in different directions, so that personality disintegrates and life becomes a failure. Long before Bergson, the *Brihadáranyaka* taught us to visualize the primacy of life through a beautiful meditation (I. iii). We may imagine that we have reached a crucial point in life which is thought of as a sacrifice. The *udgáthā*'s (i.e., of the priest who sings *sámans*) voice is about to break into a sweet melody in praise of the deity of the sacrifice. We are just nearing the point of elation when success would be in our grasp. But the senses fall apart, and each claims superiority over the others. In addition to this civil war the situation is worsened by the constant changing of party allegiance; for the senses are sometimes divinely inspired and become *devas*, gods. These very senses are again self-willed and become *asuras*, devils. These *devas* and *asuras* decide to end the strife by accepting the leadership of anyone among them who can sing the best. So they try one by one—tongue, ear, nose, and so on. But everyone of them lays a personal claim to the highest

benefit derived from the song, and does not share it with the others. In consequence of this selfishness they swell the ranks of the *āuras*. Last of all comes the vital force, whose success is proportionately shared by others. So it gets their undisputed leadership and saves them from imminent death or disruption. Through this meditation our thoughts are raised from the plane of the senses to the vital plane, where all the sense-efforts get harmonized and life is divinized.

Take yet another, and a more sublime, *upāsunā*—the well-known *panchāgni-vidyā*.<sup>9</sup> The whole world, sentient and insentient, is here thought of as factors in a cosmic sacrifice involving five successive fires arranged in order of their subtleness, and they are all knit together through a spirit of self-sacrifice so that new creation may emerge, new life may come into existence at every stage. Thus faith is poured as oblation in heaven which is one of the fires; and, as a consequence, the lunar world, the world of manes, comes into existence. This moon is again poured as oblation in the second fire, viz. the rain-god; and so rain pours on earth, which is the third fire. From this sacrifice grows food, which is offered to man considered as the fourth fire. The fifth fire is the wife. The most familiar emergence of life is witnessed at child-birth, which inspires one of the sublimest parts of this meditation. Modern decency forbids me from making this text intelligible through translation. But the ancients were bold enough to look on all things and processes from a higher intellectual and spiritual view. They did not idealize the real, to be sure, but realized the ideal through real and concrete situations. To their spiritual vision the father, the mother, and the gods who preside over the organs, were all agents in a sacrifice bringing new life into existence. As the cosmic counterparts of this outlook we are asked to think of the other world as the fire, the sun as its fuel, the rays as the smoke of that fire, day as the light of the fire, the directions as charcoal; or of the cloud god as the fire, the year as its fuel, the clouds as smoke, lightning as light, thunder as charcoal; and so on and so forth.

One of the grandest conceptions of life as a sacrifice is to be found in the *Chhāndogya*

<sup>9</sup> *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad*, VI. ii. ; *Chhāndogya Upanishad*, V. iv-x.

*Upanishad* (III. xvi-xvii), which by the way is the richest storehouse of Upanishadic *upāsanā*. The Upanishad says, मुहूर्वाव यज्ञः—man himself is a sacrifice,<sup>10</sup> and shows in details how this can be so. His life is divided into three periods corresponding to the three periods in a sacrifice called *savanas*. Each period is given its proper deities. The first part is presided over by the *Vasus* who work for life's stability, for life requires the utmost attention during this period. They are succeeded in youth by the *Rudras*, the energetic gods who are often cruel. As such, a man must be extremely judicious in what he does in his youth. Old age is presided over by the *Adityas* who attract everything towards them. Men, then, attracted by higher forces, prepare for the final departure after making their best contribution to the world. In this connection we are also asked to look on distress caused by hunger and thirst as *dikṣhā* or initiation into a higher life of struggle and achievement; on charity, non-killing, truth, etc., as *dakshinā* or offerings to the performers of our sacrifice, i.e., to our good neighbours; on merriment and laughter as hymns and songs to gods; and on death as the bath after the sacrifice is completed.<sup>11</sup>

There are many other practical hints for transforming life into *sādhanā*. The *Brihadāranyaka* instructs us to look on death and disease as *tapasyā* or penance: 'This indeed is excellent austerity that a man suffers when he is ill. . . . This indeed is excellent austerity that a man after death is carried to the forest. . . . This indeed is excellent *tapasyā* that a man after death is placed in the fire' (V. xi).

The *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad*, as pointed out by Shri Shankara, went further and anticipated the Gita theory of performing duties without thought of results or of performing them as offerings to God. For instance, we read 'तत् कर्म कृत्वा विनिवर्त्य भूयः—doing His, i.e. God's, work and then renouncing all work' (VI. 8); or 'आरम्भ कर्माण्य गुणान्वतानि—beginning to perform duties as worship of God' (VI. 4).

The *Chhāndogya Upanishad* also gives a practical hint as to how one can be in constant presence of Reality in the midst of

<sup>10</sup> Cf. संचारः पद्योः प्रदक्षिणविधिः स्तोत्राणि सर्वा  
पितृः ।—*Shivamānasa-pujana-stotram*.

daily duties : 'The Ātman is in the heart, . . . he who meditates thus goes to heaven every day' (VIII. iii. 8). Surely, it does not cost one much to bear constantly in mind that the heart is the temple of God from where He is directing and watching all our activities. We are mere tools, and He is the real architect of life. Surely, one who meditates thus is ever present in heaven. The same idea is involved in the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka* conception of *Antaryāmin* or the Inner Ruler.'

' Cf. 'He who inhabits the intellect but is within it, whom the intellect does not know, whose body is the intellect and who controls the intellect from within, is the Internal Ruler, your own immortal self' (III. vii. 22).

Also: 'Immortality is achieved and true knowledge attained when He is known in and through each cognition' (*Kenopanishad*, II. 4).

These hints and explicit directions remind us of the famous Gita verse :

'O Arjuna, make an offering to me of whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you sacrifice, whatever you give, and whatever penance you undertake.'

The difference in the two cases is that what is implicit in the Upanishads is made explicit in the Gita, and whereas the Gita prescribes duty as a worship to God, the Upanishads ask us to sacrifice everything to a Higher Reality which is felt as a living presence.

\* यत्करोषि यदभासि यज्ञुहोषि ददासि यत् ।

यत्पत्पत्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुत्वं मदपेषम् ॥- IX. 27.

(To be continued)

## VEDANTA AND SUFI MONISM

BY DR. ROMA CHAUDHURY, M.A., D.PHIL. (OXON)

Both Vedanta and Sufism are monistic systems of thought. In Vedanta, we have the conception of Brahman as 'ekamevāditiyam', one only, without a second; and in Sufism, too, Allah is taken to be not only the only God, but also the only Reality. Thus, both the systems are not only Monotheistic, believing in one God; but also Monistic, believing in one Reality, and the God of Religion is conceived also as the sole metaphysical principle, underlying all plurality, apparent or real.

Monism is of two main types. First, Reality, by whatever name we may call it, is taken to be sole unitary principle, and plurality as absolutely false. Secondly, Reality is taken as the truth of the world of plurality, which, therefore, is not an independent second principle, though as true as Reality itself. Here, again, there are two sub-divisions. In the first case, unity is expressed in plurality, and also exhausted in it. In the second case, unity is expressed in plurality, but only partially. Thus, we have altogether, three types of Monism :—(1) Unity alone is posited, plurality altogether denied. (2) Both unity and plurality are posited, but they are but the inner and outer sides of the very same principle. Here unity is wholly immanent in plurality, and the one and the

many being exactly identical. (3) Both unity and plurality are posited, but the latter is but a partial manifestation of the former. Here unity is immanent in the plurality, as well as transcendent over it, and the one and the many are not co-extensive.

In Sufism, we find all the three types of Monism.

(1) As the first type, we may take the system of Mahmud Shabistari, author of the famous Persian treatise 'Gulshan i Raz' (Mystic Rose Garden). According to Shabistari, God creates the world in order that He may become known. Like other Sufis, Shabistari, too, accepts the famous Tradition according to which when asked by David why He had created Mankind, God replied: 'I was a hidden treasure, and I desired to become known'. Moved by this desire, God, the Pure Being, reflects Himself on non-Being, as in a mirror, as the sun is reflected on water, and this reflection is the universe. But who is to know and see this reflection? None but man. Man is the eye that sees the reflection; but the eye cannot see by itself, even though the object be present before it; it requires, further, a light. This light is not the light of reason, but God's own light, through which alone man sees God. In other words, God sees Himself

through man. Thus, God is the reflected essence, non-Being the mirror, the world the reflection, man the seeing eye, and God the light of the eye. Hence, God is 'at once the seer, the seeing eye and the thing seen'. Creation, thus, is a process of successive emanations from God through which He is reflected 'on non-Being. The first emanation is universal Reason (Neo-Platonic 'pneuma'), then in order of succession, ninth and highest heaven 'arsh', the eighth heaven, other seven heavens, four elements (air, fire, water and earth), three kingdoms (mineral, vegetables and animal), and last of all, man. Man is the last in order of time, but first in order of thought, as the entire creation is really for the sake of man. Again, universal Reason, the first emanation, is also the very essence of man, the last emanation. Hence the first and the last are the same.

Thus the world is not different from God, though it appears to be so, but is nothing but God's own reflection. Every atom reflects a divine quality, and when it puts off its limitation and phenomenal character, it becomes one with the Absolute.

'Beneath the veil of each atom is hidden the heart-ravishing Beauty of the Beloved's face.' When this veil is removed, when all phenomena are annihilated, God and the world become one, and God becomes the sole reality. Just as the reflected sun is not really different from the real sun, so the world is really non-different from God.

Now, a reflection though ultimately non-different from the object reflected, is not an illusion or something imaginary, so to bring out the utter falsity of the world of plurality, Shabistari also describes as a mere figment of imagination, as a dream, as an illusion, as 'one point revolving quickly in a circle' (cf. *ulâta-chakra*). He says :

You are asleep, and this vision of yours is a dream. All that you see thereby is an illusion. On the morn of the last day, when you shall awake, you will know this to be baseless fabric of fancy. When the illusion of seeing double is removed, earth and heaven will become transfigured.

Man, too, is not different from God. Just as the same sun shines through many windows, so the same God is reflected through the plurality of mankind. Hence, there is really no distinction between man and God, and between man and man.

The glory of the Truth admits no duality. In that glory is no 'I' or 'thou'. 'I', 'we', 'thou' and 'He' are all one thing. For in unity there is no distinction of persons.

Thus, to the divinely illumined heart, the world appears in its true colour as a mere non-entity. The sole Truth is God, who is reflected on this non-Being, so that non-Being appears to be Being, although it is not really so. In this sense, non-Being is both existent and non-existent. It is existent because it appears to be real, it is non-existent, because it is not really so.

Shabistari rejects the doctrine of transformation. Being, he points out, does not actually *become* non-Being, or non-Being does not actually *become* Being. Being is the only Reality, non-Being but an empty name, a mere reflection that disappears on the rise of true mystic knowledge. 'Non-Being to become existent--this is impossible,' he points out, 'but real Being in point of existence is imperishable. Neither does this become that, nor that this. All plurality proceeds from attribution'.

(2) According to the Pantheistic school of Sufism, led by Ibnu'l Arabi and his great follower Jili, God and the world of mind and matter are identical. Creation is nothing but the gradual individualization of the Absolute, the process through which Pure Being comes to have various attributes and relations, and thereby knows itself ontologically. The process of creation consists of three stages.

(i) The first stage is the stage of Pure Being, devoid of all attributes, relations, modes and adjuncts. Such a Pure Essence has an inner and an outer aspects. The inner aspect is called 'dark mist' or 'blindness'. In this state, the Pure Essence is in a state of bare potentiality, not even related to itself as the 'other', altogether sunk in itself, and not conscious of anything, even of its own self. The outward aspect is known as 'the abstract notion of Oneness'. In this state, the Pure Essence comes to have a relation with itself, and knows itself as a transcendent unity.

(ii) The second stage is the stage of Abstract Oneness, having an inner and an outer aspect. The inner aspect is called 'He-ness', when Being is conscious of itself as negating the Many. The outer aspect is called 'I-ness', when Being is conscious of itself as the truth of the Many.

(iii) The third stage is the stage of Con-

crete Oneness or unity-in-plurality. This is the stage of the actual manifestation of the Absolute in the world of plurality, in the Hegelian language, 'the self-dissemption of the Absolute Idea'. Here the darkness of Pure Being is overcome and illumined, the potential becomes actual, and the Absolute becomes conscious of itself, identifying itself as One with itself as Many. In this stage, the Pure Essence is manifested in attributes, and the sum of these attributes is the world of plurality.

According to Jili essence and attributes are identical. There is no 'thing-in-itself' behind and beyond the attributes, but the sum of the attributes is the substance itself. Now, Creation is nothing but the manifestation of the attributes of the Absolute Essence and the sum of these attributes is the universe. Hence, as essence and attributes are identical, the universe is identical with God. It is phenomenal, but not unreal. It is phenomenal in the sense that it is the outward manifestation of the essence of God, but it really exists as the objectification of Divine Thought. In fact God and world are correlative. 'We ourselves are the attributes by which we describe God', says Arabi, 'our existence is merely an objectification of His existence. God is necessary to us in order that we may exist, while we are necessary to Him in order that He may be manifested to Himself'.

Jili compares the relations of the world to God to that of ice to water. God is water, universe is the ice, and as such the two are really identical. Just as water is the substance from which ice is made, so God is the substance, the stuff of the universe. Just as the name 'ice' is lent to the frozen mass whose real name is 'water', so the name 'universe' is lent to the world though its real name is 'God'. In this connection, Jili rejects the doctrine of Incarnation. Incarnation, he points out, implies a difference between God and man; i.e. it implies that God manifests Himself in and through man who is different from Him. But if God and man be identical, no Incarnation is possible. Jili also holds that God is not immanent in the world, but He Himself is the world.

The distinction between the above two types of Monism is as follows :

According to the first view, the statement 'God is the sole reality' means that because

the world is false, God is the sole reality—the world is not the transformation or manifestation of God, nor real. But according to the second view, it means that the world itself is nothing but God Himself, and not a second principle besides God. The world is God's actual, external manifestation, and as such, as real as God Himself. Both the views are Monistic. But the first proves God's oneness by denying the reality of the world; while the second does so by identifying the world with God. Both begin with two principles—God and the world. The question here is : How to establish Monism or the sole truth of the one alone? There are two ways of doing so—either by reducing the world to sheer non-entity, or by elevating it to Godhead; either by denying the world or by defying it. The first accepts the first and the second the second means. The first by pronouncing the world to be false says : 'God alone is real'; the second by pronouncing it to be God says 'God alone is real'. The first holds that just as the sun and its reflection are not two realities, but the sun is the sole reality, the reflection being a non-entity, God and the world are not two realities, but God alone is real, the world being entirely false. The second holds that just as the lump of clay and the clay-jar are not two realities, but the clay alone is real, the clay-jar being nothing but clay itself, so God and the world are not two realities, but God alone is real, the world being God itself.

(8) According to the third view, God is both transcendent and immanent, and the world is a partial manifestation of God. As such the world is real like God, though not an independent second reality, co-extensive with Him. This is the view of most Sufis. This view may be called Panentheism, the All-in-God theory, as distinguished from Pantheism or All-God theory, which makes God wholly immanent in the world and identical with it.

Let us now compare the above Sufi views with the Vedanta.

(1) (i) The strict Monistic view of Shabistari is similar, from the point of view of philosophy, to the Advaitavāda of Shankara. Thus, first, according to Shabistari, the world is but the reflection of Being on non-Being. We do not find any clear indication of what non-Being is in Shabistari's system. But it seems

to be similar to Shankara's *máyâ*. According to Shankara, Brahman creates the false world by its power of *máyâ*, just as a magician creates one object in place of another. According to later Advaitins, the world of plurality is nothing but the reflection of Brahman on *máyâ* or *avidyâ*. (ii) Secondly, according to Shabistari, God is not really transformed into the world, but only appears to be so. This is like the *vivartavâda* of the Advaita school. When the cause is actually transformed into the effect, the latter is called the *parinâma* of the former; as curd is of milk. But when the cause is not at all transformed, but only appears to be so, the so-called apparent effect is called the *vivarta* of the cause; as snake is of the rope in the case of the rope-snake illusion. (iii) Thirdly, according to Shabistari, the illusory world is both real and unreal. According to Shankara the world is *mithyâ*, i.e. neither *sat* or real nor *asat* or unreal. The real (Brahman) is never contradicted, but the world is sublated on the rise of the knowledge of Brahman. Again, the unreal (like sky-flower) is never perceived, but the world is. So the world is 'sadasad-vilakshana-anirvachaniya' — inexplicable. (iv) According to Shabistari, Brahman is the sole Reality, the souls and the world are illusory. The distinction between God and the world, God and soul, soul and the world, soul and soul are all false perceptions. According to Shankara, too, all distinctions and plurality are due to *upadhis* like body, mind etc., which are ultimately false. (v) Shabistari has repeatedly described the world as a dream, as a figment of imagination, as an illusion only. But Shankara has very particularly distinguished between the world on the one hand and mere illusions, dreams and ideas in the mind on the other. The world is false no doubt, but it is neither an utter non-entity like the sky-flower, nor even short-living like a dream or an illusion. Later Advaitins have propounded the theory of 'sattva-tratividyâ-vâda'. According to this theory, there are three kinds of realities — noumenal or *pâramârthika* (Brahma), empirical or *vyâvahârika* (the world), illusory or *prâtibhâshika* (illusions and dreams). The last two are not really 'realities' or *sattâ*, but 'false' or *mithyâ*. Still they are not of the same category, but the *prâtibhâshika* is lower in the sense that it is less lasting than the *vyâvahârika*, and while it is sublated by the

*vyâvahârika*, the latter is sublated by the *pâramârthika* only. Every morning the dream-images are sublated by waking perceptions; and the illusory snake, too, soon disappears by the perception of rope. But the world-illusion lasts for a very long time, life after life, and is not negated till the rise of the realization of Brahman. So, Shankara is careful to point out that the world is like an illusion, but not itself so. But in Shabistari, we find no such distinction.

(2) The second form of Sufi Monism is not found in any system of the Vedanta. No system of the Vedanta is Pantheistic, making God wholly immanent in the world and identifying the two. It has been wrongly supposed by some Western scholars that the Advaitavâda is Pantheistic. Pantheism implies two things—viz. the reality of the present world of plurality, and its Godhood. But according to Advaitins, from the transcendental or *pâramârthika* standpoint, Brahman is the sole reality, the world is false, so that the very question of Brahman's immanence in and transcendence over the world does not arise here at all—so, it is wrong to think that from the transcendental standpoint Brahman is the world. Here Brahman is only Brahman and nothing else. From the empirical or *vyâvahârika* standpoint, again, Ishvara is both immanent in and transcendent over the world. So, in no case is Brahman wholly immanent in the world and identical with it.

(3) The third type of Monism is generally found in the Vedanta system. All the theistic schools of the Vedanta propound it. Here Brahman is conceived both as immanent and transcendent. The *jîva* and the *jagat* are attributes or powers of Brahman, as such Brahman is immanent in them or they exist in Brahman. But Brahman has infinite other attributes or powers, as such Brahman is also transcendent. So, the world of plurality is but a partial manifestation of Brahman—the infinite Brahman can never be exhausted, in a single universe. So, the universe is God alone but God is not the universe alone. The propounders of this view are careful to point out that the world of plurality, though real, though not identical with God, yet does not disturb its integrity or disprove His Oneness. God is not the sole reality, still He is one, for soul and matter are real in Him, as dependent on Him, as His powers, attributes, parts

and effects. The substance is one, though its parts, attributes and powers are many, as they are not independent, 'second' substances; e.g. suppose in a garden, there is only one tree. Here the tree consists of many parts, like root, trunk, branches, leaves, flowers and fruits, each of which is as real as the tree, yet not identical with it. Still, we say that there is only one tree in the garden, not many, for root etc. are not so many trees, independently of the whole to which they belong—they are parts merely not wholes. In the same manner, Brahman is a whole of parts, a concrete unity having nothing outside it, nothing superior or equal to it, having, as such no *sajātiya* and *vijātiya bhedas*, yet having *svagata bhedas*. This conception of *svagata bheda* or concrete unity ensures at the same time, the reality of the parts and the sole oneness of the whole, the parts being whole in essence.

To discuss very briefly, the merits or otherwise of the above three types of Monism, Pantheism is satisfactory neither from the philosophical nor from the religious point of view. Philosophically, the one must also be infinite, but an Absolute commensurate with the finite world fails to satisfy the intellect. It magnifies the world but at the expense of the magnificence of God. From the standpoint of Religion, it is impossible to have a personal relation with a God who is absolutely immanent, as with a God who is absolutely transcendent. In the first case, the worshipper and the worshipped become one; in the second case, the worshipped is altogether beyond the reach of the worshipper. At most here, we have only 'a desire of the moth for the star', a distant slave-master relation of awe, not an intimate relation of love and companionship, which is the very essence of religion.

In the case of the Sufis, however, we find that their Pantheism has not prevented them from positing a lover-beloved relation between themselves and God. The inmost yearnings of their heart for a sweet personal relation with a God of love make them disregard the wisdom of their head.

The distinction between the first and third types of Monism in the Vedānta is only a distinction of standpoints. What is *pāramārthika* to the propounders of the third view is only *vyāvahārika* to those of the first. To

the theistic school of the Vedānta, the conception of God as the creator of the world, as both transcendent and immanent, as the God of love and grace, to be known and adored, as both non-different and different from the world—is a final one, the highest point man can ever reach. We cannot and need not proceed any further. But according to the Advaita school, we can and must. From the *vyāvahārika* stage, we must pass on to the *pāramārthika*, from God to the Absolute, from creation and transformation to unconditioned, changeless existence; from transcendence and immanence to a condition beyond both, from love and worship to pure knowledge, from difference-non-difference to pure non-difference. At first, we are at the stage of pure difference, when we think ourselves to be altogether distinct from God, altogether independent of Him, a self-subsistent second principle besides Him. This is Pure Dualism. Then, through knowledge and worship we reach the stage of difference-non-difference, when through knowledge and worship we realize our essential unity with God, yet retaining a sense of separate individuality. This is Modified Monism. At last, we reach the stage of pure non-difference, through knowledge and intuition, when the relation between two separate persons ceases. This is Pure Monism. At the first stage we are turned away from God and unrelated with Him in our egoity; in the second stage, we are turned towards God and united with Him in our personality; in the third stage, we are God but not in the Pantheistic sense, because we are not God as *man*, but God as *God*. In Indian philosophy alone, we have such a sublime conception of man as God Himself, and there can be no doubt that such a state, though very difficult, is not a mere unrealizable ideal.

In conclusion, it is necessary to point out that though from the philosophical standpoint there is a general similarity between Advaitavāda and Sufi Monism, yet from the standpoints of religious and mystical experience of oneness, the two are fundamentally different. Advaitavāda is a purely intellectual system, and if we call it mystical, it is intellectual mysticism. But Sufism is mainly a religious system, and emotional mysticism. However, this is not the place to discuss these in detail.

## WHAT DOES A MAN SEEK ?\*

BY SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

The first cry of a new-born babe indicates the struggle with which its life on earth has begun and the last gasp for breath of a dying man signifies his grim determination to fight even a losing battle. Man is engaged in ceaseless struggle from the beginning to the end of his life. Man works hard for material prosperity, he strives for what he considers to be the regeneration of the society in which he is born, he fights for the political independence or uplift of the nation to which he belongs, and, if he be very noble, he labours day and night for the uplift of humanity according to his light and knowledge.

In any case, he is working hard, very hard indeed. He has no rest, he gets no respite. But what does all this struggle lead to? Does a man know what he is really seeking, what he is aspiring for?

It is said that a madman was running and running—all the while giving out that he was very, very busy. Bystanders were all laughing at this funny sight. If a witness were to see the spectacle of our hard labour in life, would he feel less amused? What does our mad struggle really mean? Have we found any lasting peace or happiness? Is the world better? Has any society evolved a perfect system? Has any nation found a form of Government which is tyranny-proof or which will not with easy conscience grind the poor, oppress the weak, favour the rich, or flatter the powerful? Let us take for granted that every man is honest and sincere. But then, why is it that the condition of the world, is such? How is it that our civilization and culture now and then pass through a test which unmistakably proves that man's activities on earth have been a great failure, that with all his boast and pride man is no better than the species in the lower scale of evolution—that he has evolved physically and mentally but not morally and spiritually. This clearly shows that man has not found his real path

or, even if he has found it, he has not followed it: he is in a wrong direction.

Man works for an immediate objective. He does not look much ahead, his activities are not regulated by a vision of the future. Rather he does not work, he is, as a matter of fact, worked, he is compelled to work, and he is helpless. Nor is a man daring enough to think boldly and act fearlessly. His thoughts are influenced by traditions and associations, and his activities are determined by social or national ideas and prejudices. With all his love for freedom, man is not really free. He is under a great bondage—a thousand and one shackles bind him. And so he cannot stand erect or move according to his own will.

If man could or would think boldly, unprejudiced or untrammelled, he would easily see that no man has found real peace from anything earthly and material, that our so-called social progress or reform is a misnomer, that the talk of political regeneration or independence is a sham: it is a smoke screen to hoodwink the ignorant or misguide the unwary. An Act of Parliament, if honest, may at best give a few more crumbs of bread to the people, it may start a few thousand more schools (without knowing what real education is) for the children, or a few hundred more hospitals and dispensaries (without discovering the basic cause of disease) for the diseased, but it cannot supply a panacea against the ills of life. An Indian proverb says that when the charm with which an evil spirit will be exorcized is itself possessed by that spirit, no remedy can be expected. When the leaders of thought have not themselves found light and enlightenment, they cannot surely be expected to guide others properly.

Man no doubt wants joy, peace and happiness. But how few have found them! Ask any man what has been the experience of his life; if he be honest his confession will surely be sad and pathetic. Man seeks joy and peace usually in the possession of material wealth and power; but they are all elusive. So he

\* Contributed to the symposium entitled *What I Believe* edited by Mr. K. M. Talgeri, M.A., to be published abroad.

derives no real satisfaction though he runs after them throughout his whole life. Some joy is derived in the expectation of getting a thing or a position, but as soon as you get that, the charm is gone and you feel bored and hanker after a new thing or start after a fresh pursuit. This is the story of every man's life. But one does not get wiser by the experience of another. Everyone has to spend almost his whole life to get this experience, when, alas, it is too late to start life again.

Cruel Nature has made the senses outgoing, and man runs after external things for pleasure and peace. Peace is a state of the mind. So long as a man depends for that on external objects, he will not get it. To get real peace man has to study the mind itself, has to know the laws of mind and to control them. Man has discovered many laws of external nature; he can fly through the air, dive through the waters, knows the working of the stars even at the distance of several million light years, can say what is happening within the minutest particle of an atom; but strangely enough, he does not know himself, he does not know the laws that govern his own inner life. But that is the most important thing for a man. In order to get peace that passeth understanding, or the joy that is everlasting, man must know himself. For that he must turn the searchlight of his thoughts inward, and not run after the external world.

If a man closes his eyes for a few minutes and asks himself what he really is, he will be in a great quandary. He will see, to his great dismay, that he does not find himself. But still he has been toiling hard throughout his life on the supposition of his material existence! But if he be bold and daring enough to pursue his thoughts he will discover that there is something in him which is non-self or more than self, that there is some Existence in him which is at the back of all existence. Whatever name you may give to that Existence, to discover that for oneself is the goal of human life. 'Know thyself', said the wise man of Greece. This is as much true now as it was more than two thousand years ago.

Man must know himself, if he wants peace for himself or for the world. The man who has known himself, supplies spiritual sustenance to millions of persons for thousands of years. 'He is the salt of the earth. Without knowing himself, when a man goes to work—to reform societies, to regenerate nations, to uplift humanity, he only creates fresh problems instead of solving the existing ones.

I am afraid I am here entering into the domain of religion, at which a modern man usually looks askance. The word religion may be a taboo but the essence of religion will always remain a necessity for humanity and the world. Don't call it religion, give it any other name if you so like, but the discovery of the real Self is a thing of the foremost importance in a man's life. On that depends the peace and happiness of the individual as well as of the world.

If a man turns his thoughts inward, will not all his outward activities be paralysed and his very existence be in danger?—may ask the worldly-wise. No, a man does not or cannot plunge at once within himself so deeply that he cannot come out. When a man will pursue the objects of his inner world, his outward activities will automatically be chastened, purified and sanctified. The less a man has got faith in the external world, the more will he be free from greed, malice, anger and egotism, which are the root cause of all our troubles. If a man be honest and sincere, he will remain true to the plane of existence to which he belongs. So long as a man has not found a perfect refuge within the sanctuary of his inner world, he will certainly pursue his outward activities—just like other men—but his actions and deeds will have a new meaning, a changed outlook and an altogether different purpose. He will smoothen life where there is friction, shower love in response to hatred, radiate peace in face of troubles. And if he has been fortunate enough to reach the depth of his being and realize the Self, he will kindle a light for humanity, which will burn for thousands of years.

Has not the time come for the world to follow this path?

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

. The picture on the front cover page has been changed. The present one gives a side view of the Dakshineswar Temple, the famous centre of Sri Ramakrishna's wonderful religious realizations and ministration. . . . The frontispiece,—Partha-Sarathi—by Sri Nandalal Bose, is an inspiring reminder that India must follow the lead of the Divine Charioteer, if she is to achieve victory in her present struggle for free and honourable survival within the comity of civilized nations . . . . Swami Shivananda was the second President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. The *Conversations*, which we hope to continue, will inspire and guide many a pilgrim in the spiritual path . . . . *My Mission*, by Swami Vivekananda, lays bare in vivid outline the trials and tribulations the great apostle of Hinduism had to pass through, before he succeeded in evoking sympathy and respect from the rest of the world for India and the Hindu religion. . . . Dr. Roma Chaudhury, the talented joint-editor of the *Prachyavani*, has contributed the learned and lucid article on *Vedanta and Sufi Monism*.

### EDUCATION THROUGH A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Dr. Amarnath Jha, Vice-Chancellor of the Allahabad University, made some very pertinent observations on educational reconstruction in our country while addressing the Bihar Young Men's Institute. He observed that education must be suited to the needs of society and be conducive to progress and development of every individual. Criticizing the present system of education, he said that the fundamental defect in it was that the medium of instruction was English. He was of the opinion that

No education could be proper which was imparted through the medium of a foreign language. In India, English was being taught by those whose mother-tongue was not English. It was a fraud that was being perpetrated in the name of education.

Thanks to the efforts of Lord Macaulay, Indians have not only learned English, but, more than that, learned *everything* in English.

The English language has, no doubt, helped Indians to gain access to the vast realm of one of the best literatures of the world, and brought about intimate contact between India and the English-speaking world. But the undue importance given to English education in the Indian universities has put the Indian languages at a disadvantage, with the result that the modern educated youth finds little interest in the rich literatures of his own land. Sanskrit has fallen almost into disuse, and the gems of ancient Indian literature lie buried. Long neglect of the study of the Upanishads and the mythologies has been the cause of degeneration of our past culture and institutions. The Indian languages are given a place of minor importance in our educational curriculum. In any future educational reconstruction our universities and the Government will do well to encourage Indian authors to write suitable text-books in the different provincial languages, and thus afford greater facilities for their study than at present.

Dr. Jha deplored the appalling illiteracy in India, and suggested that in the primary stages education should be imparted through the mother-tongue, while in the secondary stage and still higher stages it should be imparted through the medium of major provincial languages as the case might be. He also regretted that there was no provision for any religious education under the existing system. We confidently hope these helpful suggestions of a well-known educationist will be borne in mind and given effect to by those who will be entrusted with the task of post-war reconstruction of education in our country.

### INDIA AND LIBERATED EUROPE

In India famine and epidemics have taken toll of thousands of lives. Even today the situation is not as encouraging as it should be. In spite of the best efforts of Government and various relief organizations, the fear is expressed, even in authoritative quarters, that the food position may deteriorate or famine conditions may recur. Sir Henry French, Permanent Secretary to the British

Food Ministry, who was in India recently, was of the opinion that no solution of India's food problem was possible without proper movement of supplies. After his tour of the country he was reported to have expressed that no adequate solution had yet been found for the purpose. The food production in the country is limited. But the demand for food is increasing. Everyone, including Sir Henry, feels that India needs a fair share of the world's food supplies. Without import of foodstuffs it appears another famine cannot be averted.

In contrast to conditions in India, there has been no famine in Europe, at least that part of Europe liberated by the Allies. Even as the Allies entered town after town in France and Belgium, they found there was abundance of food in the liberated areas. After having heard of the reports of German atrocities in occupied countries, one would have expected the most distressing conditions in these countries. Surprisingly enough it is not so. In the course of a despatch a War Correspondent says:

When we landed in France we were surprised and almost perplexed at the abundance of food in Normandy. Quite obviously no one has been starving there. . . . In Paris the people do not look pale, pinched or starved. Even during the transition period before liberation there was food to be had. . . . In Belgium the situation seems even better than in France. . . . Everything was organized and even poor people were kept alive. (Hindu).

The Correspondent was of the opinion that this state of affairs was due partly to the German organization and partly to the cleverness of the farmers and producers of those countries who, according to him, 'kept their products back from the Germans and sold them on the black market'.

Various causes may have contributed to India's sad plight. But what is urgently needed is to increase the quantity of foodstuffs in the country, both by import from abroad and production within. Of course the real causes that have led to this plight have to be investigated into in order to be able to prevent a recurrence of past mistakes. It will not help to try to throw the blame on to another's shoulder. The Government will have to take the lead and use its influence and authority in removing the wants of the people; and the people will have to do their part in helping to organize relief to the needy.

### NEED FOR STUDY OF SANSKRIT

The importance of the study of Sanskrit in the development of our national life was eloquently stressed by Dr. C. Kunhan Raja, addressing the Sanskrit Association of the Presidency College, Madras. He made a fervent call for organizing a strong movement for the study of Sanskrit literature which, he said, was essential to the cultural progress of India. The introduction of Western ideas of education and culture into our country has been instrumental in shifting the emphasis. The Sanskrit language has apparently lost its popularity and currency, yielding place to a foreign language. People have come to associate culture and prestige with English learning. Sanskrit is looked upon as something 'classical and ancient', that is to be admired, but which does not serve any useful purpose in these modern times. The learned lecturer held this was not true. In his view,

Study of Sanskrit had got a real and practical interest in their national life, and it was not a subject, as some thought, that should be confined to antiquarian research scholars.

In the interests of the proper education of our youth and the preservation of all that is best in our culture, Indians will do well to take to the study of the Sanskrit language. It is culture that withstands shocks, and not a mere mass of knowledge. The initial difficulty in making Sanskrit popular again will have to be overcome. Indian educationists would be doing a great service to the country if they combine Sanskrit education with the teaching of ideas in the vernaculars to the masses. This will give strength to the race, and better the condition of the masses.

### EDUCATION IN ANCIENT INDIA

In ancient India people devoted themselves more to spiritual advancement, and their life was marked by great religious toleration. Historians tell us that ancient India was economically much more prosperous than we are today. Educationally too, ancient India was not as backward as many suppose. Writing in the *Social Welfare*, Mr. L. Sathyam observes:

Even though there was nothing of a State education as such, education was widely diffused in

ancient India. . . . India was not illiterate, and Indians were never in such an educationally backward condition as they are today. . . . India was famous for its learning. The schools were symbols of culture and discipline ; men and women had chances of getting educated. . . . The Universities of Taxila, Nalanda, Vikramasila, Ujjain, and Amaravati were world famous, and scholars from all the world over came to India for higher studies, and education was more religious than secular as it was not merely a means of

bread-winning. To this our present-day education is a sad contrast. From facts and figures given by the writer, it is clear that the spread of literacy in India is not commensurate with the large amount of money spent on State education. An educational policy, truly nationalistic, and in accordance with the educational ideals of India will best suit the needs of the country.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA.** By SANTOSH KUMAR CHATTERJEE. Published by The Marwari Association, Chittaranjan Avenue, Calcutta. Pp. 58. Price Re. 1-4 As.

This is the first of a series of publications by the Marwari Association, bearing on the topics of the day, especially connected with India's economic, social, and cultural aspects. In these pages the author discusses, in a clear and concise manner, the Indian question in South Africa which has become prominent recently in connection with the Union Government's discriminatory legislation. Indian settlers and immigrants in South Africa have had to undergo much hardship at the hands of the European colonists. Racial discrimination, colour prejudice, and political and economic disabilities have done immense harm to the Indian community there. The book under review makes a general survey of the origin and growth of the anti-Indian feeling in South Africa, and relates the story of the struggle which the Indians had to put up in order to live like self-respecting citizens. The author analyses in a lucid and critical way the implications of the Pegging Act and its repercussions on the political and economic life of the Indian community long settled in that country. We welcome this timely publication and eagerly await the other numbers of the series that are to follow.

**CONSTIPATION AND DYSPEPSIA.** By SARMA K. LAKSHMAN. Published by The Nature-Cure Publishing House, Pudukkottai. Pp. 86. Price Re. 1-8 As.

The author is a well-known naturopath. He has written some other books too on the natural cure of diseases. In this book he deals with the causes and cure by natural methods of constipation and dyspepsia. He discourages the habit of 'drugging' oneself or constantly taking in medicines for ordinary ailments which arise chiefly from a wrong way of life. He advocates regular habits and the right type of food to be taken in the proper way for the prevention and cure of constipation. He prescribes simple methods of cure for dyspepsia and digestive troubles. The treatment of chronic dyspepsia is discussed in a separate section. In Appendix I the author relates his personal experiences and how he came to be a confirmed adherent of nature-cure. In Appendices II and III are

described some curative baths, enemas, and bandages.

### BOOKS RECEIVED

**THE BROTHERHOOD OF RELIGIONS.** (SECOND EDITION). By SOPHIA WADIA. Published by The International Book House, Ltd. Ash Lane, Bombay. Pp. xx+288. Price Rs. 3.

**THE NATURAL CURE OF EYE DEFECTS.** (THIRD EDITION). By L. KAMESVARA SARMA. Published by The Nature-Cure Publishing House, Pudukkottai. Pp. 74. Price Rs. 2.

**SELF-RESTRAINT VERSUS SELF-INDULGENCE (PART I).** (SIXTH EDITION). By M. K. GANDHI. Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Pp. 130. Price Re. 1-8 As.

**CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME (SOME SUGGESTIONS).** (SECOND EDITION). By RAJENDRA PRASAD. Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Pp. 34. Price 8 As.

**CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME (ITS MEANING AND PLACE).** (SECOND EDITION). By M. K. GANDHI. Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Pp. 28. Price 6 As.

**UPASANA (BENGALI).** (SECOND EDITION). Published by Sri Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Narayanganj. Pp. 14.

**A WEEK WITH GANDHI.** By LOUIS FISCHER. Published by International Book House, Ltd., Bombay. Pp. 98. Price Rs. 3-4 As.

We have to thank the publishers for bringing out an Indian edition of the book first published in America in 1943.

The writer, an American journalist, spent a week with Mahatma Gandhi, in Sevagram, in June 1942. This coincided with the time when a wave of frustration and indignation was surging the country due to failure of the Cripps mission and Mahatma Gandhi was about to discuss his famous 'Quit India' resolution with the members of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress. Louis Fischer in this book records his impressions of India's great man. And his intimate description of Mahatma during this critical period of Indian history is important at least from one aspect and that is to clear him from the false charge of being pro-Japanese and a lying propaganda which was resorted to by enemies of the Indian freedom movement immediately after his arrest in August 1942. Mr. Fischer, an impartial foreigner, clearly quotes

Mahatma Gandhi as having told him: 'I do not wish Japan to win the war. I do not want the axis to win.' Why then he wanted Britain to quit India? Fischer says that Mahatma Gandhi's main object in asking this was that he believed that Britain could not win unless India became free. In other words he made the 'Quit India' demand in the interest of Britain as well. Fischer, however, makes it clear that Gandhiji wanted no physical withdrawal but just a transfer of political power.

Louis Fischer has succeeded in giving an intimate picture of Gandhiji—'the biggest thing in India' according to Lord Linlithgow. His concluding remarks about the Indian leader deserve special attention, wherein he describes Gandhi the man and the qualities that make him great. He is right when he says: 'Gandhi's wisdom, his shrewdness, and his profound religiousness in a nation that is the most religious nation in the world further explain his pre-eminence. But his strongest popular appeal is his desire for national freedom and the impatient passion with which he drives towards that goal. . . . Gandhi is father and brother to millions of semi-naked, half-starved, not-too-intellectual peasants and working men who want to attain dignity and prosperity through national effort. He is a chip of their block.'

D. P.

VEDANTA-PĀRIJĀTA-S A U R A B H A O F NIMBARKA AND VEDANTA-KAUSTUBHA OF SRINIVASA. TRANSLATED AND ANNOTATED BY DR. ROMA BOSE, M.A., D. PHIL. (OXON). Published by the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1, Park Street, Calcutta. Three volumes. Pp. 881+312. Price: Vol. I., Rs. 6-4 As.; Vol. II., Rs. 6-4 As.; Vol. III., Rs. 5.

The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal and Dr. Roma Bose (Chaudhury) must be congratulated on their having placed before the public for the first time an authoritative English translation of Nimbarka's *Vedanta-pārijāta-saurabhu* and Srinivasa's *Vedantu-kaustubha* together with a critical study of other schools of thought. This task was undertaken by Dr. Roma Bose at the suggestion of Prof. F. W. Thomas, Boden Professor of Sanskrit in the University of Oxford, as her doctoral dissertation, and it was accomplished under the Professor's valuable guidance.

The first two volumes give the English translation of the above works with critical notes by Dr. Bose. The translation is also interspersed with comparative estimates of the views of Shankara, Ramanuja, Bhaskara, Shrikantha, and Baladeva. Their differences in the reading as well as interpretation of the aphorisms of Vyasa are clearly brought out, which shows great insight on the part of the writer. Her originality, too, is evident at many places. The range of study is amazing.

The third volume, which, by the way, is the most interesting and original, traces the development of Nimbarka's views through a succession of eminent teachers who sought to elucidate the succinct writings of Nimbarka, giving flesh and blood to the skeleton set up by him. Almost all of them recognized monism as their worst rival and devoted not a little of their writings to its refutation. Madhva's thoughts, too, came sometimes for criticism. But, in spite of this zeal for purity and propaganda, the school does not seem to have escaped outside influence altogether. Harivyasadeva, for instance, was clearly indebted to Baladeva.

Dr. Bose's intellect shines the most brilliantly in her critical and comparative study of other schools. The problem before the philosophers who subscribe to the reality of both unity and diversity, is how to reconcile difference (*bheda*) and non-difference (*abheda*). According to Ramanuja, substance and attribute, unity and plurality, form an organic whole, and the relation between them is non-difference and not absolute identity. Unity is here qualified by diversity, and difference is subordinate to non-difference. Shrikantha's philosophical views are substantially the same. Bhaskara holds that the relation between unity and plurality is one of difference-cum-non-difference during the state of creation, but complete identity during the causal state. Difference is due to limiting adjuncts (*upādhi*). Baladeva admits the reality of both difference and non-difference, but gives up the attempt of reconciling them, as that is incomprehensible (*achintya*). Nimbarka holds that difference and non-difference are both real, equally true, and perfectly reconcilable. His view is therefore known as *Svābhāvika* (natural) *Bheda-abheda-vāda* as opposed to the *Vishishtādvaita* of Shrikantha and Ramanuja, the *Aupādhiaka Bheda-abheda* of Bhaskara, and the *Achintya Bheda-abheda* of Baladeva.

Dr. Bose has left nothing in making the volumes interesting and instructive and the Royal Asiatic Society has made the printing and paper good. We are sure, the volumes will be an acquisition to any library of Oriental books.

#### BENGALI

ATMA-VIKASHA. (THREE BOOKLETS). Published by Sri Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Narayanganj.

We welcome the three booklets published under the above title for the use of students. Each contains a discourse addressed to the students instructing them in the true ideals of education and righteous living leading to moral and spiritual upliftment.

#### SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S BIRTHDAY

The Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda falls on the 5th January, 1945.

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. L

FEBRUARY, 1945

No. 2



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्शिष्ठोऽप्त ।”

“Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI SHIVANANDA

BELUR MATJI, 1922

It was October 1922. The evening services in the shrine had just ended. Silence reigned all around. It struck one from outside as though the monastery had no living soul within. The *sannyāsins* and *brahma-chārins* were all meditating or telling beads.

The Mahapurusha (i.e., Swami Shivanandaji), too, sat in meditation on a bed in his own room. The dim light heightened the serenity of his face and made it brighter. Some time passed by in this way, when the Mahapurusha began intoning sweetly the *Shivamahinnah-stotra* (hymn to the greatness of Shiva) in a low tone. His mind was still merged in bliss, when a devotee from Calcutta came slowly from the shrine, saluted the Mahapurusha with reverence, and sat on the floor. The devotee was intimately connected with the monastery and was a well-known figure there. After a while the Mahapurusha himself asked affectionately, ‘Who is that? Is it K.? When did you come?’ The devotee respectfully took the dust of his feet and said, ‘Yes, sir, I came during the evening services.’

‘You must have been in the shrine so long?’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Well, why do you look so depressed and worried? I hope everything is well with your family.’

‘By your blessing, sir, everything is well with the family; but for some days a question has been weighing on my mind, and hence this depression. I have come today to the monastery with a view to placing the whole thing before you. I shall begin if I am permitted.’

‘Very well, do so.’

The devotee then began with great feeling : ‘Sir, the whole country is now swayed by the non-co-operation movement of Mahatmaji. Hundreds of men and women are rotting in jails, and many are dying. The Mahatma himself is in the thick of the fight. But why is the Ramakrishna Mission quite unresponsive to this tremendous and country-wide movement? Have you nothing to contribute to this? All the people of our country are silently wondering as to what the Ramakrishna Mission is up to. Has it no part to play in the fight for the country’s freedom?’ And he concluded in a tone of complaint, ‘Do not your hearts cry even a little for the country? Have you no power to do anything?’

The calm countenance of the Mahapurusha became calmer still. He kept silent for a while and then began slowly: 'Mark it, K., the work of an incarnation who moulds an age, is beyond human conception. How can you, or for that matter the whole country, comprehend the trend of his mission? When the Lord comes down in human form, He does not come for any particular country or selected people—He comes for the good of the whole world. This time there has been a manifestation of the supreme spiritual powers of the Lord. Shri Ramakrishna as an incarnation was the full embodiment of purity. Although he had in him all the six godly qualities,' he relied, during this human incarnation, on the pure spiritual qualities. Mark, for instance, how he spent his life by the Ganges in a temple compound. How can you comprehend the deep significance of such things? He brought with him such a great powerful medium as Swamiji (i.e., Swami Vivekananda) to assist him in spreading those pure and spiritual ideas. Could not have Swamiji, if he had so willed, created a great political revolution in India? Who can stand comparison with him in his patriotism? How many hearts did weep for the poor and the miserable like his? But, as a matter of fact, he did not do so. If India could really benefit thereby, he would certainly have done so. Or leave alone Swamiji, if you will; by the Master's grace there is in us such power that we, too, can create a commotion in the country if we have a mind to. But the Master will not have us do so. He brought us as helpers in his cause, and is guiding us to do such things as will be of lasting benefit to the country and its people. And we, too, are toeing the line. We have no other desire except that of the general welfare. We cannot express to you in words how deeply our hearts are moved by the misery of the world. That is known only to the indwelling God.

'When the Master ended his sport as a human being, he bequeathed all his power and programme to Swamiji. An? Swamiji, too, after travelling over this world from end to end and making close scrutiny, established

this monastery and this Mission for the good of the world and especially of India; and he made us join this work one by one. Would it have been impossible for us to spend our lives in religious practices in hills and forests? That was what we had been actually doing. Almost all of us had roamed out of the Math at will for religious practices and penances. But it was Swamiji who called all back and put them to these works—to the works of serving human beings considered as Nārāyana. We are carrying it on even in this old age.'

Devotee: 'Do you then, sir, mean to say that national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi are not serving the country properly? One cannot surely ignore their wonderful sacrifice, suffering, and service to the country. What violence and persecution have they not suffered for their country's sake!'

Mahapurusha: 'Why should I say so? Their sacrifice, suffering, and service to the country, etc., are really very praiseworthy. Their lives, too, are really noble and ideal. Besides, they have done quite a lot for the country. None the less, our mode of work is different. They have been doing sincerely what has appeared to them good and what they have thought beneficial to the country. Do you know what we think of this? They have been doing these works under the inspiration of some of the ideals which the Master and Swamiji represented. And there can be little doubt that Mahatma Gandhi is really a great dynamic personality. It is also true that in him has found special expression an aspect of that Primal Energy which is the Mother of the Universe. Addressing Arjuna the Lord said in the Gita, "Whatever specially gifted beings there be, know them to have originated from a part of my energy," etc. It is an incontrovertible truth that wherever there is a striking manifestation of dynamism, or whoever is sought after and respected by many people, there or in him has Divine power found a special expression. That very power of the Mother of the Universe which has been awakened by the Master, is working diversely through diverse mediums. Swamiji has indicated in innumerable passages as to how the real good of India will be accomplished. What he said about the good of the country some twenty-five or thirty years ago—for instance, the elimination of untouchability.

<sup>1</sup> A fullness of splendour, righteousness, glory, beauty, knowledge, and non-attachment.

uplift of the backward classes, spread of education among the masses, etc.,—those very ideas are now being preached by Mahatma Gandhi. It is certain that the country will derive real benefit thereby. As for ourselves, we do not make much propaganda through newspapers, but show these through actual work. To be sure, we do not do so as part of a political movement, whereas the Mahatma does so as a part of a political programme. We not only crave for the good of India, but want also the real good of other countries and other peoples. We work for the good of other countries in other places, just as we do so here for India. But, of course, our programmes differ according to circumstances. And in this monastery established by Swamiji, every monastic disciple is working for his own salvation as well as for the good of all—‘आत्मनो मोक्षाय जगद्विताय च’.

Devotee: ‘But, sir, if the Ramakrishna Mission co-operated for the awakening in the whole country which the Mahatma has brought about through the non-co-operation movement, the country’s progress would have been greatly accelerated. This is not merely my personal opinion, but is the opinion of many great thinkers of the country. Why do you not co-operate with the Mahatma?’

Mahapurusha: ‘Well, I have already told you that we are working according to our own ideal. And this ideal has been left by

that prophetic seer, Swamiji. Before his prophetic vision rose the picture of the future millenniums, not of India alone, but of the whole world. With that clear vision of everything and with perfect consciousness as to what he was doing, he chalked out a programme: this was not like throwing a stone in the dark. He could peer into the distant future and see everything clearly. Moreover, there had not been in the preceding hundreds of years any manifestation of Divine power like the one that incarnated as Shri Ramakrishna. The spiritual wave will progress in the world unhampered for a long time. This is just a beginning, a foretaste. All the world will be flooded by the pure light of the sun that has appeared on the Indian horizon. It is, therefore, that Swamiji said, “The centre this time is India.” That spiritual energy will emanate from India as its centre. Who can possibly block the way of that spiritual power? India’s awakening is a certainty. India will advance so much in education, training, activity, ability, knowledge, intelligence, and all other fields, that the world will be struck with wonder. The future of India will be so glorious that the glory of the past will pale before it. Then will you realize what the Master and Swamiji came for and what they did for India. How much of their mission can a petty human intellect comprehend? They awakened, in sooth, the national *Kundalini Shakti* of India--can you not so much as conceive that?’

## READING AND REALIZATION

BY SWAMI TURIYANANDA

The Upanishads, the Gita, and Shankara’s commentary on the *Vyāsa-vratas* are the three authoritative works on the Vedanta. One should be specially acquainted with these; for this reason books on them are many. It is difficult to look into all the works. *Panchadashi*, *Yogavāśiṣṭha*, *Vivekachudāmani*, etc., are also famous books. If one studies *Panchadashi* carefully one gets a fair knowledge of the essentials of the Vedanta. Above all, spiritual practices are

specially required. Realization is the chief thing in Vedanta, and it depends on spiritual practices. Study is only an aid to it.

Doubts do not entirely vanish until *samādhi*. One cannot really be free from doubts by just studying or listening, without direct realization. But then much can be known by discrimination. Study of scriptures with faith is of great help. The value of holy company hardly needs any saying.

# RELIGION AND ITS PLACE IN OUR LIFE

BY THE EDITOR

In the Infinite, the unlimited, alone is Bliss.

## I

From the earliest times of man's history, we find him coming under the spell of the lure of the Infinite. Himself finite, limited, weak, man has felt instinctively the need for a source of infinite strength, knowledge and love, from which he can draw sustenance and joy, and thereby overcome, in the first instance, the dangers and miseries that beset him in this world, and, secondly, insure if possible a comfortable berth somewhere after death—that obvious and inevitable end to all earthly existence. The existence of this infinite power, or God as we call it, has been believed in on the testimony of saints and prophets or on revelations handed down from prehistoric times. If powerful human beings when praised and worshipped are gracious unto the worshipper, how much more so must be the reward that God will give to his worshipper! Acting on such motives, men, both savage and civilized, have tried to please God by various acts of worship, praise and prayer. But as infinite or supernatural power seems to be manifest in the sun, nature, fetishes, ghosts, Zeus, Jove, Jehovah, the Christian Father in Heaven, the Muhammadan Allah, or in God-men like Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Mahomet, and a host of other saints and prophets and Avatars, all such things and persons, both mythological and historical, have been objects of worship of some group or other of human beings. Some groups have often succeeded in converting to their particular form of belief and worship large numbers of men, and these forms of belief have been called the major religions of the world. The ordinary man finds religious gratification in the exercise of his natural senses in worship, in singing, dancing, feasting, or drinking. The man of great intelligence and intellect finds more religious satisfaction in learned philosophies or in ecstatic contemplation, and to some mystics nothing is too mean that they cannot see the power and glory of God in it. But the religious impulses, whether that of the savage or the saint, are all but expres-

All limitation is misery. (Chhândogya, VII. 23).

sions of that inner urge to expand, to be completely free from all limitation, bondage and misery, and to enter into a state of perfect peace, love, knowledge, and bliss. Each in his own way and with his own symbols has tried to worship the Infinite and thereby enter into eternal life.

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## II

But religions in their zeal to foster this innate striving of man towards the Infinite have, because of narrowness of heart and vision, also largely been the means for misdirecting this powerful human impulse for perfect freedom by forging fetters of doctrinal darkness and inhuman cruelty; so much so that to many educated people nowadays religion is often a by-word for learned ignorance, bigotry and inhuman hatred of brother man. The story of what some of the religions have done to bring into contempt, if not to destroy altogether, the true spirit of religion is one which can be read in the history of the Crusades and other religious wars. Instead of the humble attitude of the seeker after Truth, pride and arrogance entered the hearts of professed representatives of religions; love and charity were replaced by malice and hatred, and the Semitic religions especially, instead of becoming forces for unity among mankind became warring sects insisting upon a dead uniformity of unscientific belief and insincere worship.

In Europe there has been a great development of the domains of science and knowledge, which has tended not only to destroy the shibboleths of religion, but even the necessity for religion itself. Man wishes to live, whether well or ill; and when well-off he not only wants to live, but to live and lord it over others. With the tremendous powers for lordship which the pursuit of science has placed in the hands of Europeans and arguing on the principle that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, they organized themselves to produce more wealth and enjoy the pleasures this world will give. They saw that the padres and priests, though

preaching of great happiness in heaven were not themselves very eager or in great haste to go there, and were not much averse to the good things of the world, from which they wanted their flocks to abstain in order to win the kingdom of heaven. 'He who in the present state vanquishes as much as possible a corporeal life, through the cathartic virtues, passes in reality into the fortunate Isles of the soul', so said the Churchmen. But to resign 'the glittering goods of the outer and passing world', to seek peace by the denial and abandonment of earthly things and their futile values is, to modern minds, to follow the equally futile though well-worn path of the ascetics.

The truth is that Christianity did not, as is commonly supposed, convert Europe. On the contrary Europe transformed Christianity. It was an Eastern and ascetic creed, a creed of withdrawal from life rather than of participation in its fierce conflicts and competitions and was so understood in the early centuries. But the Western races were not prepared to abandon the world. Their energies were too great, the natural man in them unsubduable. . . . For the souls afraid, mortally afraid, of life—and how many they be and have reason to be—Christianity came with healing in its wings. But to the lover of life and the world, fascinated by the wide range of its vital and vivid interests, its sunlit landscape, the brave show of its human figures and enterprises, Christianity had no clear message. 'One world at a time,' men said, 'and the present is the present.' (*Gifford Lectures*, W. M. Dixon).

Side by side with the development of this critical spirit there arose the achievement of physical science with its non-creational theory of the origin of the universe and the evolution of man. Science seemed to offer a new highway for the fulfilment of human aspirations. It dispensed with the necessity of belief in a Hebrew God who sweated for six days in creating the world and had to take rest on the seventh after his strenuous labours. The ultimate materials out of which science recreates the universe, our own earth included, are the electron, the proton, and radiation.

Space-time could be conceived as empty of matter but containing travelling radiation—light, cosmic rays etc. Then the radiation might for some reason congeal itself into parcels of equal quantities of protons and electrons. Such a universe would know at first only these two substances, familiar to us as the nuclei of hydrogen atoms and free electrons. (*An Outline of the Universe* by J. G. Growther).

In short the whole universe, organic and inorganic, is the result of an unexplained,

and perhaps inexplicable, concatenation of these 'wavicles' of radiation.

As the process of nature evolves from energy into protons and electrons, and from these into atoms and molecules, and from these into colloidal particles, the approach to the complication of life is evident. The colloids are the root from which living processes have grown.

The exact steps of evolution from colloid to living particles, are not yet known as the evolution from proton and electron to colloid is known, and the evolution from simple living cell to man is surmised. (*Ibid.*)

What do we learn as a result of the new scientific view of the universe?

The modern man understands at least that wealth rather than magical ideas is connected with the fuller life. In the vanity of his mind man has always tended to magnify the distinction of his spirit. Consequently improvements in civilization have usually been accompanied by an apparent decline in the quality of the human spirit. The declining nation often pretends to exceptional spirituality; while the rising nation with closer knowledge of reality has a humbler opinion of itself and the nature of the source of its improvement. . . . The chief condition of a fuller life is that every man should do his job and increase the wealth available for distribution. . . . (*Ibid.*)

Assertions about the seen are more dangerous than those about the unseen, because it is possible to verify the truth of the assertions about the seen, and thus test the intelligence and character of the seer. (*Ibid.*)

. . . The revolutionary, hard and brilliant intellects of Heisenberg and Dirac do not yield mysticism; that is a spurious growth stimulated in uncreative by creative minds. Mysticism is the product of those who fail to understand, the substitute for comprehension and the margarine of philosophy. (Note, *Ibid.*)

These quotations are typical of the attitude of the educated young men of today in Europe and America, and in India even. Reeling under such sledge-hammer blows of science, Christianity in its various traditional forms has been losing hold on the convictions of its professed adherents.

God and the soul are ignored as outworn superstitions. The denial of any future life saps the foundation of Christianity and other purely theistic religions. Christianity or what is left of it is fast changing into a sentimental humanitarianism.

What is now left of the old theology (Christian) in the circles of the educated and the intelligent? What do we now hear of the fall of man, the plan of salvation, the sacrifice of Christ, the redemption of the world through the shedding of blood, of predestination, of the blessings in store for the believer, the torments that await the

infidel? Who now believes, as did St. Augustine, in the damnation of unbaptised infants, or that a man's actions in time determine his destiny throughout eternity? (*Gifford Lectures*, W. M. Dixon).

Thus modern enlightenment makes out belief in and adoration of God to be incompatible with scientific ways of thinking, and that religion is merely a curious survival of primitive superstition. Science is considered as the latest flowering of the cultures, and to prove that it is also the best many leaders of science are pointing triumphantly to the splendid achievements of modern science in putting under man's control tremendous powers to be used for the advancement of the comfort and happiness of mankind.

### III

There is no denying the successes of science, and one cannot sufficiently admire the scientific achievements of our day. As days pass on, science is adding fresh laurels to its crown. So far, so good. But scientists have been running like horses with blinkers, along the road just under their noses only. At present some of them are also guilty of the same narrowness of vision and intellect which is so characteristic a feature of Western religious sects. Science, by insisting on a theory of strict determination excludes the obvious facts of creativeness and volition. But at its best the theory of determinism is but a methodological assumption. The theories of evolution, though in themselves inadequate to explain the phenomena of evolution, arrogantly deny the possibility of all other agencies other than the mechanical. Science can as yet offer no satisfactory explanation of the great facts of evolution, reproduction, development, heredity, fixity of type, memory, purposive self-direction, learning or profiting by experience, or intelligent adaptation. Science is guilty of denying the truths of things which it has not studied at all or only inadequately.

After all, the modern scientific approach to the problems of life and the universe is but one of several. The artistic and the religious, each employing its own unique methods and technique of introspection and intuition are equally valid, equally instructive to mankind, equally venerable, equally a part of the racial experience. Science studies successfully the 'measurable' and the 'observable', *ergo*, all things 'unmeasurable'

and 'unobservable' are unscientific,—such an attitude is far from scientific.

Luckily the tide of scientific bigotry also is turning. The naive materialism of the nineteenth century has gone the way of exploded dogmas. The notion of 'substance' has been replaced by the notion of the fundamental intangible electron and the 'behaviour' of interacting quanta. In other words, matter is now the result of mysterious, intangible phenomena whose elusive activity is beyond our observation. Science is beginning to realize that like all men's thinking, it itself is and must be anthropomorphic, and that all our theories and the facts on which we build our theories are conditioned by our nature, by our human needs. Progressive leaders in the various branches of science no longer maintain that scientific knowledge is the only valid form of knowledge. Science has become conscious of its limitations. The time is coming when our religious and aesthetic experiences will be taken seriously and accepted widely, when they will not be dismissed as illusions, as the merely accidental and meaningless result of the make-up of our brain and body. That we can experience reality under aspects other than those discussed by science is more and more being recognized. Religion, Art, and Science must all play their part to make the life of humanity, fuller and richer.

### IV

The search for God or Truth has always been one of man's chief concerns. The race has known that there were some things which it could find out only by scientific observation; others, like poetry and art, which can be discovered only by creative activity; and still others—and these the deepest and most subtle—to be mastered by seeking of ultimate reality in personal terms, which is religion. In and for itself nature is manifestly nothing. Take away the actor and where is the play? Take away the scientist and where is his science? Without a perceiving mind, there can be neither science, nor art, nor religion. Religion therefore insists that the spiritual ideals of man have causal efficacy, and have the power to mould and alter both man and his surroundings, and that the spirit of man partakes of the essence of, or is identical with, the infinite spirit that moves all nature, animate and inani-

mate, and makes possible all phenomena, physical and metaphysical. It may or may not turn out to be true that the ultimate postulates of the modern physicist may obey the laws of a strict determinism. But the activities of men, on the contrary, are purposive and prompted and sustained by spiritual ideals, by aspirations towards higher and better things. Religion asserts that man is not a fortuitous concatenation of protons and electrons, but is a conscious centre of creative activity towards the attainment of ever-increasing spiritual harmony between himself and the rest of the universe. Life, thus conceived, is the adventure of the individual human soul aspiring towards the Infinite, the Perfect, in which it may lose all sense of limitation and want.

But the critical attitude engendered by science has made man rely primarily upon his reason and has done good to the religions in one sense. It has destroyed those theologies and those particular brands of religion which have been persisting in refusing to admit the validity of scientific knowledge. Science cannot, however, destroy religion, for that is the outcome of the religious spirit; and the religious spirit is as innate as the scientific. Mythologies, doctrines, and dogmas have lost their previous hold on people, unless these are symbolic or representative of any universal spiritual experience. For example, the Christian Churches have been forced

to lighten the ship by throwing over many antiquated traditions, and the educated Christian has accepted Copernicus and Galileo, and Newton; he has accepted Darwin; he has accepted Jeans and Eddington; he is prepared to accept Einstein if he could understand him. He has surrendered the geographical heaven and hell, perhaps without fully realizing all that implies. He accepts the ascent of man from lower forms; the immense age of the earth; the even more amazing vista which astronomers allow us to contemplate in the future. . . . (*Science and Religion*, Gerald Howrad.)

If life is to be lived worthily, the religious spirit must pervade all our activities. Religion must become living, directing as well as inspiring men's actions, both individual and collective. This does not mean that religions should lay down what we should do from our cradle to our grave. But it should provide us with a touchstone, a way of looking at nature, the world and ourselves, which

harmonizes our ideas and meets our daily requirements.

And what spiritual principle can possibly provide men with this necessary sustenance for the soul's advance in the universe?

Leaving aside theologies and traditions, the only place where we can look for it is in ourselves, in the conscious assertion of our essential spiritual nature in the same way as the great saints and prophets of all times and places have done on the basis of their own personal experience. Revelation and reason may help us, but without personal experience ideas never become life-giving, satisfying. This is true not only of the religious, but of all other spheres of human knowledge.

Einstein, reputedly the greatest scientific genius living, after a reference to the anthropomorphic character of the idea of God common to most religions, writes :

Only exceptionally gifted individuals or especially noble communities rise above this level; in these there is found a third level of religious experience, even if it is seldom found in a pure form. I will call it the cosmic religious sense. This is hard to make clear to those who do not experience it, since it does not involve an anthropomorphic idea of God. The individual feels the vanity of human desires and aims, and the nobility and marvellous order which are revealed in nature and the world of thought. He feels the individual destiny as an imprisonment and seeks to experience the totality of existence as a unity full of significance. . . . The religious geniuses of all times have been distinguished by this cosmic religious sense, which recognizes neither dogmas nor God made in man's image. . . . How can this cosmic religious experience be communicated from man to man, if it cannot lead to a definite conception of God or to a theology? It seems to me that the most important function of art and of science is to arouse and keep alive this feeling in those who are receptive. (*Italics ours.*) It is quite natural that the churches have always fought against science and persecuted its supporters. But on the other hand, I assert that the cosmic religious experience is the strongest and noblest driving force behind scientific research. (Quoted in *Outlines of Modern Science*.)

It is such cosmic religious experience of unity that the Upanishads proclaim again and again in no uncertain terms. To quote one example :—

तदेतदिति मन्यवतेऽनिदेशं परमं सुखम् ।  
कथं तु सद्विजानीयां किम् भाति विभाति वा ॥  
न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रवारकं  
जेमा विष्णुसो भान्ति कुरुतेऽयमप्निः ।  
तमेव भान्तिमनुभाति सर्वं  
सत्यं भासा सर्वं भिर्विभाति ॥

(*Katha, V. 14, 15*)

"That indefinable infinite Bliss people conceive as this (in various objective forms). But really how are we to realize whether it shines and becomes an object of our perception or not? For there (in that undefinable infinite Bliss) none of these—the sun, the moon, the myriad stars or the lightning flashes,—not to speak of the ordinary flame of fire—is able to shine (i.e. have no separate visible existence). All these but shine deriving their light from that.'

न संदर्शे तिष्ठति रूपमस्य  
न चक्षुषा परम्यति कश्चनेनम् ।  
हृदा मनीषा मनसा भिक्षुतो  
यत्र तद्विद्वरमृतास्ते भवन्ति ॥

(Katha, VI. 9)

'His nature is not limited by any forms, so no human eye can see Him. Those brave souls who realize His true nature by purified inner vision become free from the fear of limited existence.'

How to achieve this saving vision of the Infinite? By Yoga, by stilling the activities of the senses and the mind completely, by the inhibition of all experience, physical and mental, resulting in self-absorption in the Infinite.

यदा पश्चावतिष्ठते ज्ञानानि मनसा सह ।  
बुद्धिश्च न विचेष्टते तामाहुः परमांगतिम् ॥

(Katha, VI. 10)

'The wise call that the highest stage when a person's mind and the senses of perception cease being active and no more conceptional activities arise in his intellect.' The perceptions of the outside world give rise to conceptions in us, while our innate conceptions determine the nature of our perceptions. Because of this ceaseless flow, in and out, we are unable to experience ultimate Reality. The way lies by getting beyond both.

## VI

The discerning reader will at this point raise the plausible objection that we began earlier with finding out a spiritual principle which harmonizes our ideas and meets our daily requirements; and that now we are advocating the time-honoured and apparently defeatist method of running away from the joys of the world as well as its sorrows, by plunging into a life of negative contempla-

tion. If inhibition of all our activities be the only road to God, then the remedy seems to be worse than the disease; it is like cutting off the head of a man to cure his headache. This is the most common, and seemingly the most formidable objection that is raised against the religious life, that, by holding up as the ideal means the method of contemplation and withdrawal from the world's activities, religion has taken away from men all initiative and incentive for betterment of their world and their fellow-men.

But such objections are superficial and are not valid because they judge religion from the point of view of man's immediate necessity for bread, butter, and wine, sexual satisfaction and children, and all the paraphernalia that contribute towards ensuring the pleasures of life. But the religious spirit implies that we should seek the kingdom of God first, that we should become established in the knowledge that we are immortal spirits, partaking of the essence of the Infinite, and not mere ephemeral, physical and psychic phenomena, not will-o-the-wisps wafted hither and thither in an aimless fashion. *God realization is the ultimate goal of religion.* Only then do we seem to arrive at a complete solution of all our difficulties.

Only those who are fed up with the tantalizing joys and sorrows of this existence will try to find out and follow this path. The more refined and intellectual the individual, the more fitted he is for the path of contemplation, for at every step he realizes the futility of tinkering with the problem of complete freedom by trying to seek it in the activities of a world, which by its very constitution, is a world of bondage and limitation for him in some form or other. That is why all the great religions have emphasized that if we are to be perfect even as 'our Father in heaven' is perfect, we should seek this perfection in eternal things.

It is true that all persons have not reached that stage that has marked true religious geniuses like Krishna and Buddha and others like them. To such people, the lovers of life, inclined to activity and enjoyment, to whom the 'observable' world is more intensely real and lovable than the world of religion, religion points out a way without lowering or giving up the Truth it stands for, for reaching the ultimate goal even while participating in all activities and joys and

sorrows of this world. This is the lesson that Krishna taught to Arjuna in the Gita. It is the lesson of 'Karma-Yoga'. Work in the world, experience all its joys and sorrows, but develop and maintain the attitude of a witness, a spectator; be detached, understand that the gifts of your body and mind are but instruments at your disposal. Be not affected by the nature and state of your instruments. Use them and improve them for getting all the experience you can out of them. If they become beyond repair, throw them away and get new ones, and go on with the process, till you find more joy in yourself than in these instruments. If you believe in God, do all your work 'for the glory of God' as the Christians say, or because it is 'the will of Allah'. Also do not desire for yourself the fruits of the work you have done. Ordinarily like coolies we want our wages for every bit of work we do. But the hero of action who wants to reach God must not care whether the benefit of the work he does he himself gets or somebody else. He works because his whole being delights in work, and personal loss or gain do not enter into his calculations. He works solely with a view to benefit others. Soon he begins to work in the feeling that the humblest, the easiest and the readiest of

duties is to lay down one's life for the ignorant, the ill-behaved, the unkind, nay, for every soul that is weary and heavy-laden. For are not all these but the forms in which the Infinite appears? The man inclined to action should therefore learn to work in a detached way, calm and self-poised, knowing that the hidden hand of God is everywhere, and that it is God himself who is fulfilling himself in the world in various ways.

People who are attracted by the joys and prizes which physical and mental activities in connection with the outside world hold up before them must remember that it is only by giving up the attraction, the fascinating hold, of lesser things that we are enabled to rise to higher things. Those to whom the joys of the things of the spirit are not of higher value will certainly get caught in the attraction of the world which is so much with us. By insulating your body, you can touch a live electric wire, and not be harmed. Similarly insulate yourself with the covering of non-attachment, with the idea that all is God's in this world, that you are only a beneficiary, and you can live and manipulate the 'live' wires of the world's activities without coming to any personal harm.

## THE SPIRIT OF ASIA\*

BY DR. DHIRENDRA NATH ROY, M.A., PH.D.

How long still the present world war will continue to suck the life-blood of nations is a question uppermost perhaps in all of us today. Directly or indirectly we all have been terribly involved in this total war and have been witnessing its blood-curdling episodes here and there and almost everywhere in this unhappy eastern hemisphere of ours, not as silent spectators but as co-sufferers with those of nations' precious youths who have been immolating themselves at the call of civilization to save it from the brute violence of Axis barbarism. Our enemy, who fights for a losing cause and has long begun to taste of the bitter reverses of war, shows no desire to submit. On the contrary, like a hydra-headed monster he

seems to possess some strength still to survive the numerous fatal blows from the Herculean hands of the Allies. There is no doubt that he will be sagging soon before our ever-growing forces and will accept his ultimate defeat as the inevitable decree of destiny, a just retribution for the sordid lust for power which has plunged the world into an abyss of unspeakable misery, death, and devastation. But how soon he will do so no one can predict. Indeed none but an amateur statesman or a professional astrologer can hazard his scientific surmise upon it. In the midst of this protracted uncertainty as to the

\* Address delivered at a joint assembly of the Associated South-West University and the University of Yunnan, Kunming, in April, 1944.

time limit of achieving our ultimate victory our sufferings have been going on in such an ever-increasing magnitude that the golden rays of our positive optimism can hardly pierce through the dense gloom of the prevailing pessimism caused by the woeful spectacles of the war and its dire effects upon mankind. A bright and glorious future which promises to be our lot does not seem enough to console us out of the dismal present in which we live.

Indeed, the grim reality of the present which seeks to absorb us in the depth of pessimism seems to touch the core of our philosophic mood with its all-inclusive tragicalness. Philosophy characterizes man's reflective condition. And man reflects when he faces a problem affecting his normal course of life. In this total war which has affected the normal course of life of almost every individual by its incessant call for undergoing sufferings and sacrifices in order that the forces of evil may not triumph and thus destroy all that is most worthwhile and noble in man and in his world, our philosophic mood is most profoundly touched to open our vision to the sad spectacles of universal sufferings. For a time we are not excited with a passion to do nothing but to strike and kill our enemies; we are rather weighed down by the thought of these sufferings that have overtaken not only all of us of the Allied Nations but also millions of innocent people who dwell in the land of the Axis aggressors. And when we consider the flowers of humanity, the youths of all nations, both the Allied and the Axis,—those blooming souls who alone make this world, through their spirit of selflessness, service and sacrifice, a better place for man and yet who are now being killed in their thousands almost everyday, should a man be condemned outright if he cannot help brooding over all these tragic phenomena of our world today and being overwhelmed by higher sentiments to pause and wonder and do almost nothing else?

Perhaps he does not deserve to be condemned, for his feeling is undoubtedly sincere and noble. But he must think more over the stern facts that confront us and not allow himself to be swayed by pious emotion at this critical time when all that is best in human life and civilization is seriously in jeopardy. With adequate calmness of his

spirit which has been ruffled and overwhelmed by the sorrows and sufferings of the day he may be able to perceive that his pessimism with all its appealing qualities is after all a mere philosophic gossamer dissolving itself before what we may call the fourth dimensional reality of the war. The spatial character of the reality with which we are so vitally concerned today makes it appear very tragical indeed, but it is a reality seen only in part as long as its fourth dimension, that is, the time factor is not fully considered. The sufferings and sacrifices of all the nations engaged in the present world war cannot be considered as the whole reality apart from its ultimate result which time will surely bring to us. This ultimate result is the supreme goal which enthuses us to plunge into the fiery ordeal of war and enables us to bear it patiently. To all of us of the Allied Nations this goal is 'Victory', yes, victory at all cost, victory over the forces of evil that have been let loose by an exotic gang of neurotics violently intoxicated with the vodka of Nietzschean philosophy. It is no time to mourn over the terrible cost which involves our determination to win victory, for otherwise we are doomed—nay, the whole civilized mankind is doomed to an irrevocable state of sufferings and disgrace with which our present sufferings can hardly stand any comparison. It would be a most tragic myopia on our part if we see the cost of the present war isolated from that glorious thing called victory for which we have been paying so heavily all this time. Let not pessimism blur our vision to the whole reality of the war which concerns not only our own fate but also the fate of our children and our children's children.

Moreover, for us of the Allied Nations in China and India this war is not simply a tale of unmixed sufferings and sacrifices. It is something more than that,—it is an opportunity, perhaps a blessed opportunity. Sufferings and sacrifices have been our lot even in the pre-war situations of Asia. That these have fallen on us for no real fault of ours has not been fully grasped by others. For a long long time since the Crusaders made Europe develop a new kind of interest in Asia our unhappy days began. Those days gradually brought in their trail only darker and denser nights of sufferings and humiliations for us. In vain we raised our choked

voice to tell our tale of woe that it might reach the masses of Europe, those whose heart could not but be good and responsive to the call of the crying heart of Asia. The resounding voice of organized propaganda by those who have been unkind to us, has been rather too strong in its effect upon Europe to let our feeble voice be heard. Our long continued fate of suffering gave it the appearance of a just recompense and we almost accepted it as not without some tinge of truth.

Let no one understand here that we have in mind any particular nation of Europe when we speak of this long story of our misfortune. There are good and noble people in every nation,—people who are refined and cultured enough to discountenance and condemn all exhibition of racial egotism, of vulgar habits and cruel exploitations. What nation in Europe or anywhere else has become great without some such people therein maintaining a higher manhood in them? It is, therefore, not any particular nation of Europe but a particular type of people coming from the various parts of Europe of whom alone we think as we dwell upon the facts of our pre-war misfortunes.

The present war has given us an opportunity which never before we had in all our past relation with the people of the West. It is an opportunity of the people from the masses of Europe coming to meet the masses of Asia with a common purpose and ideal to extirpate the enemies of higher manhood, of culture and civilization. A common misfortune for all of us of the civilized mankind has made possible what has hitherto been considered impossible, that is, the elimination of the social line of the so-called East and West and the formation of a new great society of Allied Nations belonging to all the continents of our world. Inspired by a common cause against the menace of resurgent barbarism threatening us from both the East and the West the people from the masses of Europe and America, of Australia and South Africa, have come in our midst for joint deliberation, decision and action. This has indirectly served to replace the old nasty feeling of racial exclusivism and prejudice by a new wholesome feeling of sympathy and fellowship.

In this refreshing atmosphere of mutual sympathy it is no longer difficult for our Allies from other lands to see and under-

stand our problems and sufferings of the past as we see and understand them. The opportunity has thus arisen to make a frank expression of these to them without being misunderstood any more. It would be a tragic folly on our part not to do so while they are here personally seeing our things and conditions and no longer relying upon fabricated impressions of narrow and bigoted minds. For, when again after the war shall we find them in our midst in such highly representative numbers with a genuine attitude of understanding and sympathy for us? Those who would like to say that this is no time to raise such matters when we are so deeply plunged in a world crisis do not understand the whole problem confronting our world today. By making a free and frank expression of our past grievances in thinking of the real cause of which we cannot help thinking also of some type of Western people, we only seek to clear our conscience and lighten our heart to our Allies whom we welcome as our friends and whom we expect to regard us as their friends. It is the sincerity of the heart that makes friendship genuine and lasting. What has long been rankling in our heart may appear to be like a complaint to them against those some of whom may be even their own fellow-countrymen. Should it still be allowed to remain in a suppressed condition in us? Can we know one another intimately in that condition? Can we make our friendship genuine and lasting? If we do not try to know one another now, we may not have a second opportunity.

And this is fraught with a possibility which is certainly ominous by its very nature. We are, of course, confident that this war will end in the victory for the Allied Nations. We can hardly think otherwise. Accepting that as a settled fact, we may feel jubilant in anticipation. That is quite a healthy step to stimulate our jaded nerves and to overcome our present sufferings. But while it is all right to think from now as to how best we may celebrate our hard-earned victory when it is won, we should also have an occasion to consider what the defeat to our enemies, the Axis peoples, may lead them to be. While we may not have any strong reason to be concerned about the Hitlerite Germany which is farther from us in Asia than from our European Allies we cannot afford to be unconcerned about the post-war

temper and conduct of defeated Japan, our nearest Axis aggressor. The Allied Nations may, after the victory, adopt some strong measures and impose many disabilities upon the Axis Powers to prevent their rising to be a menace again. The hard lesson of the period between the end of the last world war and the beginning of the present one undoubtedly makes them wiser and more careful. But one can hardly help being sceptical about the net result of preventive measures, especially against the defeated Japanese people whose Asiatic environment is quite different from that of Germany. He has to recognize the fact that the Japanese people cannot be totally crushed by any measures however strong just as the German people were not crushed after their defeat in the last world war.<sup>1</sup> The Japanese are no less clever than the Germans. On the other hand, they have something to their advantage which the defeated Germans did not have in 1918. They are quite conscious of the various old grievances which their Asiatic environment harbours against some Western people. Indeed they are almost co-sufferers with the rest of Asia. When they are defeated and disabled by post-war measures they will certainly not resign to their well-deserved fate but will seek every possible means to utilize the aggrieved feeling of the Asian people. They will do everything to rouse this feeling to its bitterest form and then incite them all to rise in unity and be prepared for a racial war. There can be little doubt that the Japanese have already set themselves to this task of working upon the strained racial feeling in their conquered territories. If that feeling can be successfully worked upon everywhere in Asia and developed into a form of bitter race hatred against the West, the stage is then quite prepared for a far more disastrous war than

what has hitherto been witnessed. Japan has the necessary organizing capacity and war experience to instil hope and confidence in such terrible trial of powers. We shudder to think of such eventuality, for human society cannot stand a shock like it.

Let us, therefore, not be misunderstood if we take this opportunity to tell our allied friends from outside Asia of our past grievances against some of their own people and ask them to help us clear our old misunderstanding. Let them be good and liberal enough to understand our frank criticism of their ways of life and study their persistent problems anew. Let them appreciate our honest effort to make men develop a universal outlook of life and thus live in peace and harmony.

We do not want Japan to find an opportunity or excuse to stir up our war impulses and lead us into a third world war. It would mean the virtual repudiation of the very noble ideal for which we all of the Allied Nations are fighting. Japan today is a lost child of Asia having been spoiled by Western influences in gross material and military lines. If circumstances compel the ancient peoples of Asia to listen to Japan's alluring whispers and promises, they too will fall under the spell of the Axis cult of greed and power and eventually lose themselves in its dangerous holocaust.

That would mean the final exit of the noble spirit of culture and civilization for which the old countries of Asia, more especially China and India, have silently undergone sufferings and humiliations for so many ages of the past. That would mean Asia repudiating her own past stubborn and heroic adherence to things and ideals which her ancient wisdom conceived for the benefit of the whole mankind. That would mean Asia losing her own soul in the maelstrom of cant, swagger and cruelty.

What precisely is the nature of the spirit of culture and civilization which Asia represents? That is a question which at first may seem puzzling in view of the fact that Asia contains more than one distinct civilization, especially such as the civilizations of India and China. There is no doubt that each of these two great civilizations has its own peculiar character representing a peculiar type of people. But the peculiarity of each of these civilizations does not represent the

<sup>1</sup> This has been borne out by the famous British statesman Sir George Schuster, K.C.S.I., K.C.M.G., C.B.E., M.C., M.P. In an article published in the *Asiatic Review*, January 1944, he said, "But perhaps some one will ask, 'Why all this talk of security? . . . Will not Japan be crushed and powerless after the war?' My answer to such questions is that it was in just such a mood that we all faced the future after 1918. We thought Germany was for ever emasculated, and that Russia was in such chaos that she could not within any foreseeable time become a great military power to be taken into account among world forces. And now we know the realities. . . . That she (Japan) can be utterly crushed out is impossible (Vol. XL, No. 141, p. 54).

common spirit of Asia; what is common in them does. When we consider this point the answer no longer seems difficult. The spirit of Asia is the spirit of harmony and adjustment. This may be stated in other terms, such as, unity, sympathy, fellow-feeling, etc. but the substance of the underlying thought would not be very different from it. The great Vedic literature of our Aryan forefathers in India reveals to us the truth of it. It tells us about their ceaseless and heroic efforts to understand the mighty elements of nature and to be in fellowship with them. It tells us how wonderfully they solved the most difficult problem of cultural conflict arising from their coming into contact with the old Dravidian people of India, people who had already developed a distinct civilization of their own, by incorporating the latter's ideas and ideals in their own Vedic literature as we find in the somewhat weird contents of the Atharva Veda. The ancient literature of China which represents the ideal ways of Chinese life embodies the same spirit of harmony and adjustment. The Confucian doctrine of the *Jen* or universal love means it. True to the logic of life Confucius in his noble spirit of good-will could not but uphold the law of reciprocity stating that one really desiring to maintain himself must sustain others, one desiring to develop himself must develop others. In other words, the highest thing in life is, according to this great sage, to draw from one's own self a parallel for the treatment of others. The spirit of his splendid ethical philosophy is thus the spirit of harmony with all, especially in human society. Lao Tzu, the other master mind of China, sought to emphasize in his philosophy of the *Tao* the ideal to be in harmony with nature. Almost at the same time arose in India the great Buddha with a most strikingly impressive personality whose sublime thought profoundly influenced the life and the mind of the Indian people for several centuries. The basic spirit of his doctrine was to realize the essential harmony or unity of life and, therefore, love all life. Although his doctrine was in accord with the main ethical ideas of the Vedas, its supreme position in Indian spiritual life came to an end within a few centuries, nay, as a new system of faith it had virtually to disappear from India. This happened because it saw the discrepancy of the Vedic rite of animal sacrifice with a

strongly critical attitude and also because it did not concern itself much with reality in its mystical and transcendental aspect. The Indian mind is by nature very susceptible to mysticism. As the Vedas have enough of it, especially in such portions of them as are called the Upanishads they have served to inspire the Indian life far more than anything else. Lack of mysticism in the Buddhistic faith caused its sublime ethical ideal to slowly fall from the height of glory it had attained in popular esteem yielding its place again to the Vedas. Since then Buddhism has never again been able to recapture its old position in the land of its origin. But that did not detract from the position of divinity or *avatar* which its originator the great Buddha held and is still holding in the heart of Hindusthan. The Hindu spirit of harmony was clearly manifest in the deification of the Buddha although there was some disagreement with his teachings. Buddhism, however, received a hearty welcome in all the surrounding countries of the north and the east of India. China with her wonderful practical mind gave it an imperial welcome inasmuch as it was quite in consonance with the natural spirit and ideal of her people. The moral code of Buddhism was to them like an amplified version of Confucianism. The acceptance of Buddhism by China showed the inherent spirit of unity between the two ancient countries of Asia. And these two countries, which have preserved their cultural spirit for the last forty centuries, can justly claim to represent the spirit of Asia.

This spirit of Asia, the spirit of harmony and adjustment, has made it possible for her to maintain in her bosom diverse forms of life even today, to allow diverse racial types to live and thrive in mutual recognition and appreciation of their differences. It has enabled her to be the proud mother of a rich variety of culture and civilization, the mother of all the living religions of the world. It has enabled her not only to tolerate and love variety but also to develop a strong dislike for uniformity. Indeed Asia maintains her variety to cultivate her spirit of unity. For her it is the highest art of life.

When others laugh at us Indians and Chinese because neither of us has yet been able to form a nation they do not seem to understand us. They do not try to see why India is still like an epitome of the world,

more like a continent than a country. They do not see why China is still like a 'sheet of loose sands'. They do not know what causes us to go slow in adopting the modern method of civilization and progress. They do not know because they have not read our cultural history or if they have read it they have not understood it.

The spirit of harmony and adjustment which permeated the cultural history of India made her go slowly in drawing within the ambit of her great civilization the various types of people representing various levels of life. It was clearly against this spirit to forcibly absorb them into her civilization. Instead of that she allowed all these types of people to live in their own atmosphere by the side of civilization coming whenever they liked in close contact with it and choosing whatever they liked of it to adopt in their own ways of life. Thus closer and closer contact and the consequent familiarity with the civilization enabled them to gradually assimilate its various elements in such a spontaneous and natural manner that they themselves did not know since when they belonged to it. In many cases our Aryan forefathers, who carried the torch of civilization, sought to show interest and even appreciation of some of the naive or crude customs of tribal faiths introducing in them high spiritual interpretations and then adjusting them with their civilization. This way many tribal people of India have been slowly initiated into the higher ideas of life,—attracted, won, and finally absorbed. The process is slow indeed, but it involved no cultural friction or maladjustment. There is no problem or misunderstanding in this method of cultural infiltration, for it is founded on the spirit of harmony and adjustment.

The Indian is by nature against any kind of cultural imposition. To him the very conception appears to be self-contradictory and degrading, since it is uncultural for a cultured man to impose his culture upon others. An act of imposition involves the application of force, and no cultured man can think of resorting to force in any of his social undertakings. This is why India could not tolerate or appreciate any foreign civilization which was sought to be imposed upon her. She knew quite well that there were good things in every civilization, but it could not be good if imposed upon her. Naturally whenever

there was a case of an alien civilization seeking to impose itself upon her she rejected it outright and was careful enough to see that no trace of it could remain in the land. That was why although Alexander succeeded in conquering some part of India he failed to implant the Greek civilization there. This has been admitted by all great historians. Here is what the reputed British historian V. A. Smith writes: 'The campaign (of Alexander) although carefully designed to secure a permanent conquest, was in actual effect no more than a brilliantly successful raid on a gigantic scale, which left upon India no mark save the horrid scars of bloody war. India remained unchanged. The wounds of battle were quickly healed; the ravaged fields smiled again as the patient oxen and no less patient husbandmen resumed their interrupted labours; and the places of slain myriads were filled by the teeming swarms of a population . . . India was not hellenized. She continued to live her life of "splendid isolation", and soon forgot the passing of the Macedonian storm. No Indian author, Hindu, Buddhist or Jain, makes even the slightest allusion to Alexander or his deeds.'<sup>2</sup> This fate of the Greek civilization in India was inevitable although undoubtedly it had many splendid things within it which have been a real inspiration to all civilized peoples of even today. There were Greek colonies in India left by Alexander, but these India took care to absorb and today we do not know even where these colonies were. Similar fate had met the other invading hordes and raiders like the Sakas, the Huns, and the Scythians. Having finished their devastating raids, carnage and rapine they finally chose to settle in the land. Instead of imposing their own ways and culture they all became absorbed. The same process of cultural absorption has worked upon the successive invading forces of Tartars, Mongols, Turko-Iranians, Afghans, and so on, who no longer retain their distinctive racial names and other differences but have come under the common name of Moslems to be soon united or adjusted with the people of the land and to be real Indians.

The history of the Chinese people, I believe, tells us the same truth. China, true to her spirit of the *Jen*, could not think of imposing

<sup>2</sup> *Early History of India*, p. 185.

her civilization upon the various backward and tribal groups of her people. They all have been, on the other hand, free to imbibe the civilization of the land by having every opportunity to come into closer contact and be familiar with it. It is the same cultural process of infiltration as in India which has been working in China all throughout her long history. That was how the desert nomads, the Mongols and the Manchus, who ruled over the destiny of China for a long period of time finally became Chinese. It is very doubtful if these fierce people can now be clearly distinguished from the pure Chinese type of people.<sup>3</sup> The absorption of several millions of Israelites in this great civilization is a striking fact having perhaps no parallel in world history. We all know how this chosen race of the Holy Bible have resolutely been resisting, for the last nearly two thousand years, every attempt of the European people to absorb them. The Jews in China, it is said, came originally from Persia about the second century B. C. They, of course, brought with them their characteristic race fertility, religious fidelity and cultural pride. Yet in the association of the Chinese people they lost themselves altogether. This has been stated by a popular Chinese writer although with an unnecessary air of self-exaltation.<sup>4</sup> He seems to be quite sure that 'it was due entirely to the family system that the Chinese were able to absorb the Jews of Honan who today are so thoroughly sinolized that their Jewish tradition of not eating pork has become a mere memory. The race consciousness of the Jews can be shamed into oblivion only by the greater race consciousness of the family-minded Chinese, and it was no mean accomplishment in the ethnological field.'<sup>5</sup>

Dr. Lin Yutan, author of this statement, can certainly feel proud of this great accomplishment on the part of his people. But

those who actually won these stubborn Jews into the heart of their culture and society must have done it without any conscious feeling of it, for otherwise they could never think of socializing with them such hyper-conscious racialists. Only the spirit of harmony and adjustment could account for this cultural accomplishment.

This spirit has been working still in China to absorb her millions of tribal people in her south-western borders and interiors, such as the Hakkas, Miao, Yaos, Lolos, Chungchias, and so on. Like India, China too has to take time to dispose of her problem of nation-building, for it is against her nature and tradition to use directly or indirectly any force to civilize them.

The peculiar spirit which we thus find so clearly vindicated in all the struggles of India and China did not fail to assert itself also in other parts of Asia, especially in her olden days. The Greek conquerors failed to impose their civilization upon the near-eastern countries almost as completely as they failed in India. Many Greek generals who succeeded Alexander in their campaign of conquest 'founded dynasty after dynasty within Asiatic limits'. But in the end practically no impression of these conquerors remained. Even the mighty Roman conquerors fared no better. We are told by a very distinguished British author that 'though he (the Roman) succeeded in southern Europe he failed in Asia as completely as in Britain. . . . He made the bold barbarians of Gaul, and of the more stubborn barbarians of Iberia, Romanized peoples, but of Asia he Romanized not one tribe. Something in them rejected him utterly, and survived him; and at this moment among the eight hundred millions of Asia, there are not twenty among whom can be traced by the most imaginative any lingering influence of Rome.'<sup>6</sup>

Yes, something in them rejected him utterly. What this something is does not have to be said any more. True Asia rejects all imposition of culture. She does it because it militates against her very ideal of culture.

Is it very hard still for our allied friends to understand why we should be so anxious to tell them of our past grievances at this time

<sup>3</sup> 'When the Mongols of the Yuan dynasty entered China, they not only failed to destroy the Chinese race but were absorbed by the Chinese. Chinese not only did not perish, but even assimilated their Mongol conquerors. The Manchus subjected China and ruled over her for more than two hundred and sixty years; they not only did not wipe out the Chinese race but were, on the contrary, absorbed by them, becoming fully Chinese.' (Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, *San Min Chu I*, translated by F. W. Price, p. 28).

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Lin Yutan, *My Country and My People*, p. 35.

<sup>5</sup> Meredith Townsend, *Asia and Europe*, pp. 23 and 24.

when we are so terribly involved in war against the Axis aggressors ? In the common crisis which has overtaken the entire civilized humanity of today we have come together with a genuine feeling of mutual sympathy and fellowship. This is the psychological moment, the most opportune time for us to know each other thoroughly and intimately. This is the time when we can sow the seed for permanent international unity.

Never before in the history of international relationship have we heard the political leaders of Europe and America speak so sincerely and earnestly about the ideal of universal justice and fellowship as we hear today. The cult of power is fast losing its old fascination to them, perhaps through its dreadful exposure of bloody carnival that ultimately brings to itself a more dreadful

nemesis. In its place we hear now the talk of an Atlantic Charter, of the four freedoms, and so on. The wild cyclonic temper of the Atlantic seems to have been prevailed over, almost with the touch of a miracle, by a fresh soothing air arising from an alchemy of cruel facts. This air is now seeking every passage to transmit its lively ozone to the other ocean areas, more pronouncedly to the Pacific, and is thus giving signs of a new refreshing atmosphere that may revitalize the almost asphyxiated spirit of Asia and let it assert its supreme position this time over the entire globe, wiping out forever the narrow fictitious boundaries of the East and the West and thus heralding the dawn of a new era of peace and love and genuine fellowship for all.

## WHAT DID SWAMI VIVEKANANDA TEACH IN AMERICA ?

BY SWAMI ATULANANDA

The story of the life of Swami Vivekananda is the story of the development of great ideas; it is the story of a soul groping, struggling for light and self-realization and finally of attainment. It is the story of the inner nature of man. First intellectual struggle, scepticism, and doubt; then, burning faith and illumination—these were the stages through which Swami Vivekananda passed before he became the great exponent of the Vedanta religion, the greatest of his time.

In the presence of Swami Vivekananda we stand in the presence of spirit self-revealed; we stand face to face with Reality. Listening to his voice we listen to a voice coming from afar, a voice reverberating through the ages, travelling in silence, recognized only by mystics and sages. Blessed are they who can hear that voice; twice blessed are those who came under the spell of that voice when made audible to mortal hearing.

When we study the life of Swami Vivekananda we study the book of life. For his was a life not only of divine revelations, but also of extraordinary human events.

Before his meeting with his divine Master, Bhagavan Shri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda was known as a restless youth with

keen intellect always in search of Truth. Steeped in Western culture, he was constantly analysing the religious and social conditions not only of his own, but also of foreign nations. But when he met his Master a new world opened up before him. For in the temple-garden of Dakshineshwar, near Calcutta, he found a man, the living embodiment of ancient wisdom and the ancient culture of the East. Nay more ! He found a man who could stand up and say, 'I have seen God'. It was the blending of these two lives, of the old sage at Dakshineshwar and of the young college student known as Naren, that produced the personality revered by the world today as Swami Vivekananda. It was as the spokesman of his Master's message that we knew the Swami in America. We knew him as the young prophet burning with zeal and enthusiasm, a magnetic personality. At the very beginning of his public career in America, at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, the man stood revealed. At the very opening sentence of his short address, six thousand men and women rose to their feet applauding the foreign monk. The audience was touched as no preceding speaker had been able to touch them. The

Swami's masterly address on that occasion, alone, would have been sufficient to secure for him an exalted position in the American mind.

The Swami's genius expressed itself in various ways. In his lectures in America he threw a new light on the Vedanta philosophy; he breathed new life into the old doctrines; he made Vedanta a living practical power in the lives of the people.

Swami Vivekananda came to us without credentials. He came as he had wandered in India from village to village, and with American hospitality he was welcomed and accorded an opportunity to speak. And when he spoke it was of the religious ideas of the Hindus. What the Swami accomplished in his first address directed to the nations of the world at Chicago, was a marvellous disclosure of his genius.

Not only the different Christian churches were represented, but also eight great non-Christian religions. These were Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Mohammedanism, and Mazdaism. Each representative of these great faiths spoke from his own limited standpoint.

When Swami Vivekananda spoke, a new atmosphere seemed to pour into the great Hall of Columbus. A new spirit took possession of the audience. Sectarianism, bigotry, superstition were swept aside to make room for the harmony of all religions. It was an overwhelming message of good will and brotherly love. After addressing his audience as Sisters and Brothers of America, when at last the applause that greeted these words had subsided, the Swami began by thanking his audience for their cordial welcome. He thanked them in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world; he thanked them in the name of the millions of Hindus of all classes and sects. 'I am proud', he said, 'to belong to a religion that has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance'. And he closed by expressing his hope that the bell that tolled that morning in honour of the Convention might be the death-knell of all fanaticism, of all persecution, and of all uncharitable feeling.

Here the religious consciousness of India spoke through Swami Vivekananda addressing itself to the religious consciousness of the West. Behind Swami Vivekananda stretched

a world that dated from the Vedic period, long ages of spiritual development; facing him sat the new world, young, tumultuous, overflowing with energy and self-assurance, yet alert and inquisitive. Into the ears of the youngest among the nations he poured the wisdom of the ages. 'We Hindus', he once said, 'do not merely tolerate, we unite ourselves with every religion, praying in the mosque of the Mohammedan, worshipping before the fire of the Zoroastrian, and kneeling before the Cross of the Christian. We gather the flowers of all religions, and binding them together with the cord of love, make them into a beautiful bouquet of worship'. And with the insight of the prophet he declared: 'Upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of their resistance, "Help, and not fight, assimilation and not destruction, harmony and peace, and not dissension" '.

The Swami spoke of *mukti*, the doctrine that man becomes divine by realizing the Divine. 'Religion', he said, 'reaches its perfection in us only when it leads us to "Him who is the One Life in a universe of death, to Him who is the constant basis of an ever-changing world, to Him who is the only Soul, of which all souls are but delusive manifestations" '. And when he spoke of the doctrine of the *Ishta-Devata*, the right of each soul to choose its own path, and to seek God in its own way, the West was startled by his catholicity, for such freedom in religion the West had not even dreamt of. For divided as the numerous Christian churches may be, they all agree on this one point that there is one path and one only, one Saviour, Jesus the Christ, and unless one believes in him there is no salvation.

But Swami Vivekananda pointed out that such a narrow conception of religion invariably leads to fanaticism. And in his own humorous way he told the story of the frog who thought that his little well was the universe. 'All *isna*', the Swami said, 'are little frogs hypnotized into the belief that their particular wells are the best and grandest. Fanatics refuse to listen to what other religions have to teach'. And he chanted, 'Hear ye children of immortal bliss, even ye that dwell in the highest spheres, for I have found the Eternal One, and knowing Him ye also shall be freed from death'. 'Then alone', he said, 'can misery

cease, when I am one with happiness; then alone can error cease, when I am one with wisdom; then alone can death cease, when I am one with life'.

The Swami had little patience with the constant harping on original sin, in the West. 'Why do you dwell on sin so much', he exclaimed, 'you are heirs of immortal bliss. We Hindus refuse to call you sinners! Ye are the children of God, holy and perfect beings. It is sin to call man a sinner, it is a libel on human nature'. And straightening himself to his full length he called out, 'Come, O lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep. You are souls immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal. In the heart of everyone of you the same Truth reigns'.

Thus the Swami cleared the theological atmosphere of the West. He sounded the trumpet call of glad tidings, of hope, of cheer, of salvation for all. And a new thought-wave swept over America. The Swami brought the Gospel of the Divinity of man.

At the Parliament of Religions Swami Vivekananda had suddenly become a world-figure. The newspapers acclaimed him the greatest figure at the Parliament, a noble, sincere man, learned beyond compare. *The New York Critique* spoke of him as an orator by Divine Right. The Hon'ble Mr. Snell wrote that on all occasions the Swami was received with greatest enthusiasm. People thronged about him wherever he went, and hung with eagerness on his every word. The more liberal Christians confessed that he was 'a prince among men'.

Thus through the newspapers the masses of America came to learn about the wonderful monk from India. Thus the Swami was introduced to the American nation, for every American (from the north to the south, from the east to the west), even in the smallest villages reads his daily paper.

Thousands of enlightened persons, Emersonians, Transcendentalists, Neo-Christians, Universalists, whether hearing him personally or reading about him, felt that the Swami was, indeed, an Oriental prophet come to them with a new message. And so meteoric was the transformation from 'security to most exalted fame, that it can be truly said that the Swami 'awoke one morning to find himself famous'.

But to the Swami all this glorification was

as so much straw. It did not touch or elate him. He bowed down to that great, divine Power that stood behind him, that inspired him, that spoke and acted through him. He rather regretted that the joy of the free life of the unknown Sannyasin was at an end. There was no more quiet, no more the peace of retirement. His life was now for the public, strenuous, ceaseless labour, giving himself for the good of all.

Neither was his task always a pleasant one. Travelling from place to place, always lecturing, always teaching, suffering from the severe cold of the American winter taxed his strength to the utmost. Then, ignorant people plied him with stupid, irritating questions. Upon these he fell like a thunderbolt to defend his Faith, to uphold the prestige of his motherland. His replies came as flashes of lightning, and the venturesome questioner would find himself impaled on the lance of the Swami's keen intellect.

Swami Vivekananda had come to speak the truth, not to flatter the American nation to win their applause and sympathy. He had a great reverence for Christ and his teachings, but he saw the flaws in current Christianity. He pointed out the defects of so-called Christian civilization. And sometimes he had to deliver hard blows.

In Detroit, before a large audience he exclaimed, 'One thing I would tell you. You train and educate and pay men, to do what? To come over to our country and curse and abuse all my forefathers, my religion, everything we hold sacred. These men come to us and say, "You idolaters, you will go to hell." If all India stood up and threw at you all the mud of the Indian Ocean, we would not be doing the smallest part of what you are doing to us. And for what? Did we ever try to convert the West to our religion? Nay! We say to you, "Have your own religion and let us have ours." Neither have I come to make you Hindus. I have come to make you better Christians. Remember Christ's saying: "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God." Everything that has selfishness for its basis must perish. If you want to live, go back to Christ. Go back to him who had nowhere to rest his head. Go back to him, and give up your vain pursuits. Better live in rags with Christ than in palaces without him.'

It is no wonder that some of the Swami's

utterances gave rise to opposition. Some tried by all means to impair the Swami's reputation. But amidst all these distractions he kept his equanimity of mind, trusting in God, and consoling himself with the thought that the high-minded Christians were his avowed admirers. The Swami remained simple and pure as a child.

On one occasion he said, 'I am a plain-spoken man, but I mean well. I want to tell you the truth. You are my children. I want to show you the way to God by pointing out your errors. Therefore I do not flatter you, or always say fine things about your civilization. I point out to you what Christ taught.'

And when a distinguished clergyman asked the Swami how he could understand Christ so well, he replied, 'Why? Jesus was an Oriental. It is only natural for us Orientals to understand and love him.' And again, when he was asked if he did not resent the false reports circulated about him, he said very gently, 'Not at all; this is also the voice of the Beloved. My Master would never recognize personal abuse or malice; "Everything,"' he said, "comes from the Mother Divine."

During his first period in America, the Swami found a life of constant change a great strain, mentally and physically. By nature he was meditative. His friends often found him wrapped in his own thoughts, hardly conscious of his surroundings. But the constant friction of alien thoughts, endless questioning, and the frequent clash of wits in the Western world, awoke in him a different spirit. He became as alert and wide-awake as the world in which he found himself. He began to study various problems. He compared Western and Eastern culture, and he investigated the industrial and economic systems of America, that he might apply these later to the wants of his own people. He visited museums, universities and art galleries. In short, he became a keen student of American life. As the result of these observations he later declared, 'As regards spirituality, the Americans are far inferior to us, but their society is superior to ours. We will teach them spirituality, and assimilate what is best in their society.'

The Swami was now admitted into all classes of society, even the most exclusive. Thus he met the most brilliant intellects of the country. The famous orator and agnostic, Ingersoll,

himself a man of bold and fearless speech, once told the Swami: 'If you had come forty years ago to preach in this country, the people would have hanged you or burned you alive. But now the nation is somewhat prepared to accept you. Your ideas are most enlightening.' And Mr. Fesla, the most distinguished scientist of his time, said, 'Swami, I appreciate your lectures so much because they are so scientific!'

But with it all the Swami felt somewhat disgusted with the fame he had acquired. He felt that the interest he had awakened was after all superficial. He desired earnest-minded disciples whom he could teach the deeper truths of Vedanta, who would follow his advice, and struggle for God-realization. He therefore began to hold private classes in New York City.

There, in his room, students came to him. They sat on the floor, in Indian fashion. As one of the students has expressed: 'How intensely interesting were these classes! Those who were privileged to attend them can never forget it. We seemed to live in a different world, to be transplanted to a higher sphere. And when we went home we seemed to walk on air. Swami was so dignified, still so simple, so earnest, so eloquent.'

In this humble way did Swami Vivekananda do his work in New York. Thus he taught wealthy Americans of high position in the fashion of the ancient Rishis. He felt that now he was carrying on his work, slowly but surely, on the right footing. He gave himself, all he had to give, in teaching and training these chosen followers. He taught them how to calm the restless mind, how to control the senses, how to lead the natural desires into spiritual channels. He taught them to meditate, and how to form the habit of thinking spiritual thoughts. He explained to his students that religion was not a question of belief, but of realization, and realization was the result of earnest practice.

Swami Vivekananda lived not for himself, he lived for others. 'I do not care a straw for your *bhakti* or *mukti*,' he exclaimed, 'may I be born again and again, and suffer a thousand miseries, so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, my God in the poor and ignorant of all races and all species. I would go through a thousand hells to do good to others. This is my Dharma.'

In America the Swami taught from the *Bhagavadgita* and the *Upanishads*. He taught the different systems of Yoga as so many means to realize God. He preached the Advaita Vedanta philosophy. His was a religion of strength and fearlessness.

'Fear he declared to be the greatest sin. 'Man is born to conquer nature. Faith in ourselves, and faith in God, this is the secret of greatness. We are the Atman, deathless and free; pure by nature. Life is short, the vanities of the world are transient. Let us preach and live the Truth.'

And again he said, 'Desire nothing, look for no return. It is desirelessness that brings results. And remember, the stepping stone, the real centre, the real heart of all spiritual culture is Renunciation. Arise ! Awake ! and stop not till the goal is reached !'

On one occasion the Swami said, 'If I succeed in helping one single person to realize God, I shall feel that my labours have not been in vain; I shall consider my work a success.'

We tread here on sacred ground. We are not here at liberty to indulge in vain speculations. But, perhaps, I may be permitted to give it as my sincere conviction that this hope of Swami Vivekananda was more than fulfilled. Certain it is that the Swami has been a spiritual blessing in the lives of thousands of Americans.

Those of you who have watched the growth of the American mentality since the Swami's

advent in that country will agree with me that the Swami's work has not been in vain.

Today in magazine articles and other publications, today from platform and pulpit, ideas are promulgated akin to the teachings of Vedanta. For this broader outlook Swami Vivekananda laid the foundation. Today science with its wonderful progress is approaching the ancient Truth, taught by our Rishis ages ago, the truth that One Intelligence, One stable Consciousness is at the back of the ever-changing universe.

The American mind is in search of a final solution of the problem of life. This solution, so far as human speech can reveal it, has been placed before the congress of nations by Swami Vivekananda many years ago. Brother Sannyasins have followed the Swami in the field. And at present several trained Sannyasins of the Ramakrishna Mission are in America, in different cities, preaching the life-giving truths of Vedanta.

America is a vast country. The number of workers is small; the demand is great. But I trust some day the Swami's vision will come true, and the West will be honey-combed with Sannyasins of our Mission. It is only the deeper truths of religion—as the Swami has pointed out—that can bring harmony and understanding between the nations of the world. This harmony, this understanding, based on the divinity inherent in man, is the message Swami Vivekananda brought to the West.

## UPANISHADIC MEDITATION\*

BY SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA

### *The Meaning of Upasana*

Thus far we have dealt with some *upāsanās* which may be called practical Vedānta. But *upāsanā* is a much more comprehensive term and covers not only a life of action but actionless life as well; and, as such, it was the concern of not only the Kshatriyas but of all, though the former were the discoverers of some of its most important methods.

Let us, then, first understand what the word *upāsanā* exactly means. Literally it means sitting near, mentally approaching an ideal. In Vedantic literature we come across several

definitions of this term. In the *Vedāntasāra* the definition runs thus: '*Upāsanā* is a kind of mental process relating to the Qualified Brahman, such, for instance, as the *Shāndilyavidyā*.' But this definition is not comprehensive enough. For in the *Upanishads* we have not only *Brahmopāsanā* but also *abrahmopāsanā*—it has as its object not only the Qualified Brahman, but much more that is not Brahman. Shankaracharya, accordingly, defines *upāsanā* thus in the introduction to his commentary on the *Chhāndogya Upanishad*:

\*Continued from the January issue.

'*Upāsana* means this, that, after accepting some object of meditation as set forth in the scriptures, one should have such a current of thought directed towards it that no other idea may arise to break the flow.' In the commentary on the *Brihadāraṇyaka* (I. iii. 9) he writes: '*Upāsana* is mentally approaching the form of the deity or the like as it is presented by the eulogistic portions of the Vedas relating to the objects of meditation, and concentrating on it, excluding conventional notions, till one is as completely identified with it, as with one's body, conventionally regarded as one's self.'

So, according to Shankara, the object of meditation may be any *śāstric* object, or any deity, or Brahman. Besides, it is essentially a mental process, and aims at a knowledge of the object through identification. But *upāsana* itself is not knowledge. This is a very important point to keep in mind. *Upāsana* may lead to realization through the purification of the mind, but by itself it falls far short of realization. The process of knowing and meditation are both mental processes to be sure, but knowledge of an object is not subject to the option of the knower, inasmuch as he cannot know it at will to be other than what it actually is. He knows the object as soon as his organs of knowledge begin to act with reference to the object. In meditation the meditator's will plays a prominent part. The meditator has full freedom to meditate or not or do it in the manner he best thinks fit. The *Panchadashi* (IX. 74-82) brings out this distinction very aptly: 'Knowledge is determined by the object, but *upāsana* is dependent on the subject.' The *Panchadashi* also emphasizes the element of faith in *upāsana*. One must have faith in the object and the process of meditation as taught by the scriptures and the *Guru*. Knowledge does not presuppose any such faith. A third point to note is that the objects of *upāsana* are not merely imaginary things or concepts,—nor need they be real in the ordinary sense of the term; but they are presented by the scriptures. Thus knowledge and meditation are entirely different. As such, if we are to divide the Vedas into two parts, we shall naturally place the part on meditation under *karma* rather than under *jñāna*. As Shankara remarks in his commentary on the *Brahma-sutras*,

That which is presented for performance irrespective of its nature and which is dependent on man's will, is called duty. As for instance the instruction, 'The sacrificer will meditate on the deity to whom he is to sacrifice,' or 'He will mentally meditate on *sandhyā*'. Meditation implies thinking. Though it is mental like knowledge, a man may at will do it, not do it or do otherwise than instructed, since it is subject to option. But knowledge presupposes means of knowledge; and these means depend on the nature of objects. So knowledge cannot be done, not done, or otherwise done. It depends solely on the object and not on injunction or the subject's will. So, though knowledge is mental, it is entirely different from action. In such instructions of *upāsana* as 'O Gautama, think on the man as a sacrificial fire, think on the woman as a sacrificial fire,' the thinking of man and woman as fire is only a result of scriptural instruction and is dependent on the subject's will. But the knowledge of the real fire as fire is neither due to such an instruction nor to the subject's will. What is it then? It is knowledge determined by fire which is being perceived with the eyes; it is not action.

Thus far we are all agreed. Our next stumbling block is with regard to *nididhyāsana*, which term also is roughly translated as meditation. Some Vedantists, too, would think of *nididhyāsana* as meditation in the ordinary sense of the term. But Sureshvaracharya in his *Vārtika* is at pains to show that this can never be so. In the *Brihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* Yājnavalkya says to Maitreyi, his wife, 'The Self is to be seen, to be heard of, to be thought of, and to be made an object of *nididhyāsana*. Everything is known when the Self is seen through hearing, thinking, and *vijnāna*'.<sup>1</sup> Commenting on this Sureshvara says that the use of the word *vijnāna* in the second sentence in place of *nididhyāsana* in the first, shows that *nididhyāsana* is not ordinary meditation, but a meditation of a higher order in which there is no sense of exertion of will, no conscious employment of the thinking process, no intellection whatsoever. It is constant presence of a conviction of the form 'I am Brahman', and yet it falls just short of *aparokshānubhuti* or the direct realization of the Self.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> आत्मा वा आरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निविद्या-सितव्यो मैत्रेयि । आत्मनो वा आरे दृश्यनेन शब्देन मत्या विज्ञानेनेदं सर्वं विदितम् ॥ II. iv. 5). *Vijnāna* literally means special knowledge.

<sup>2</sup> अनुवादे यथोक्तानां प्रकान्ते दर्शनादिषु ।  
विज्ञानेनेत्यथ कथं निविद्यासनमुच्यते ॥  
ध्यानाशंका निवृत्यथं विज्ञानेनेति भगवते ।  
निविद्यासनशब्देन ध्यानमाशुंक्यते यतः ॥  
अपरायतो शोषोऽत्र निविद्यासनमुच्यते ॥

### Aims and Methods

We have thus distinguished *upāsanā* from *karma* on the one hand and *jñāna* and *nididhyāsana* on the other. We have seen that its proper function is to prepare the mind for the final realization, the intuition or revelation of Ultimate Reality. It takes hold of the man as a whole. It deepens his emotion, strengthens his will, and expands his intellect. The Upanishads do not stop simply by saying 'मनसावातुददेषः—the Self is to be intuited by the mind,'<sup>5</sup> they also show the technique through which the requisite power of intuition is to be developed. For in Vedanta, we must remember that, we have not to reach God or to obtain Him as we obtain things. On the contrary, we have merely to unfold our own latent infinitude and gradually grow till we reach the highest expansion. The highest realization comes as a sudden and spontaneous opening of insight; all that *upāsanā* can do is to free the mind from all impurities and worldly distraction, and concentrate it on Brahman so that light may descend unimpeded. The highest immediate knowledge or intuition in which the subject and object become absolutely identified comes after a long process of preparation; and *upāsanā* helps greatly in these preliminary stages. Let us take some examples.

Pravâhana Jaivali, of whom we have already spoken, taught some Brahmins an *upāsanā* in which the imagination is guided to higher and higher strata till it loses itself in the highest thing which is Brahman. Thus *sāmans* are shown to be resting on voice (प्राण), which is dependent on vitality (प्राण), which again is sustained by food (प्राण) produced with the help of water. Water comes from the upper atmosphere. This rests on solid earth. This earth is dependent on the subtlest of all things which is Brahman. Thus if we push our chain of dependence to the farthest limit, we cannot escape being in the presence of the Highest Cause. This is a meditation based on the ascending order of things.<sup>6</sup>

In another *upāsanā* this ascent is combined with gradual expansion. We cannot possibly give all the details, but present only the bare outlines. First, we are asked to medi-

tate on such words as *hāoo*, *hāee*, *atha*, etc., which meaningless words are added in *sāma* songs for making a tune full. We have to consider *hāoo* as the earth, *hāee* as air, *atha* as moon and so on. Then we come to the *sāma* song as a whole divided into five parts which are thought of differently as identical with different things in the universe, till at the end of this section of the *upāsanā* we have almost exhausted everything gross and subtle including the mind, the vital force, the organ of speech, etc. The next stage leads us to a higher synthesis where a bigger *sāman* having seven parts is taken up as a symbol for all conceivable things. In the fourth stage different kinds of *sāmans* bearing different names are used as symbols. The climax is reached in the last stage, when, by the widest sweep, the whole universe is imposed on all the *sāmans* conceived as a unified entity. All the three worlds, all the three Vedas, all the gross stellar bodies, and all living beings as well as all subtle things are thought of as identical with *sāman*, and the Upanishad concludes the *upāsanā* by saying, 'He who meditates thus becomes identified with all'.

But if the Upanishads taught the *upāsanās* of infinite expansion outwardly, they were careful to prescribe meditations for probing into the subtlest of all subtle things. Thus we are told that the earth is the essence of all elements, since it is their highest creation. Water is the essence of earth since it is water that makes the particles of earth a compact whole. Herbs, that is to say, the juices of the herbs, are the essence of water since they maintain life. Man is the essence of these juices since they impart strength. Speech is the essence of a man since speech distinguishes him from animals. *Rik* mantras are the essence of speech. The *sāmans* are the essence of the *riks* since music is the highest achievement of voice. And *Om* is the essence of all *sāmans*.<sup>7</sup> This *Om* is the name and symbol of Brahman—'Omiti Brahman'. Through this process of searching for the essences of things we reach Brahman. Again we are to deduce everything from that *Om*, for everything is from *Om*—'Omiti idam

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, I. xiii-xxi.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, I. i. 8.

<sup>7</sup> *Taittiriya Upanishad*, II. viii.

ओकार एवं सर्व—*Chhāndogya Upanishad*, II. xxiii. 8.

<sup>8</sup> *Brihadāraṇyaka Upanishad*, IV. iv. 19.  
<sup>9</sup> *Chhāndogya Upanishad*, I. viii-ix.

*survam*,<sup>3</sup> and everything is penetrated through and through by *Om*; *Om* is everything. This double process of induction and deduction carries us to the centre of things and gives us a universal view.

The Upanishads were, however, careful not to carry all and sundry to the highest meditation irrespective of their mental progress. Various *upāsandas* of various degrees and subtlety were prescribed for people in various stages of life. 'From the familiar to the unfamiliar' was their motto, as it was also 'from the concrete to the abstract'. It is a mistake to think that the *upāsandā-kānda* was meant only for those who retired from life, the *vānaprasthas*. The students, too, had their *upāsandas*, as we have already shown in connection with *samhitopanishat*. The house-holders had theirs, as for instance the *panchāgni-vidyā*. The priests engaged in sacrifices—the chanters of hymns, the pourers

of oblation, the singers of *sāmans*—had their adequate *upāsandas*. And so also had those who led a retired life, or were otherwise debarred from undertaking the costly and prolonged ceremonials. And as a usual rule they started from the most familiar things—the students from letters, the ordinary people from acts, the thinkers from concepts, and the meditators from lower meditations. And the whole process aimed at a grand synthesis in which the gross and subtle, the microcosm and the macrocosm, the transcendental and the immanent lost their separate existence. Thus at every turn we are reminded of the identity of the *adhibhūta*, the *adhibhāva*, and the *adhyātma*—the natural, the supernatural, and the personal. In fact, the *upāsanas* aimed not only at intellectual grasp but also at spiritual identification.

(To be Concluded)

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### To OUR READERS

Among our new contributors to this issue is Dr. Dharendra Nath Roy, M.A., Ph.D., who was visiting Professor in the National Yunnan University, and Professor in the National College of Oriental Studies, Chungking, China. He gives a brilliant exposition of what Asia Stands for. . . . Swami Atulananda is an American Sannyasin of the Ramakrishna Mission, who is almost an octogenarian now, and is spending his time in the Himalayas. Here he gives us a graphic and authentic account of the impression made by Swami Vivekananda on thinking Americans of his time.

### ROMAIN ROLLAND

According to the Paris Radio, Romain Rolland, the famous French author and literary genius, has passed away, at the age of 79, at Vezelay in the Yonne Department. In October 1948, the German Radio had announced his death which later proved to be incorrect. In the death of M. Romain Rolland the world has lost a noble soul, and India a sincere friend who truly understood and appreciated her cultural greatness, and her spiritual personalities. He was one of

the greatest writers of the modern age who combined erudition with a rare catholicity of vision. Being a true well-wisher of humanity, and a passionate lover of peace, he deeply felt the anguish of soul seeing the horrors of war and the tragedy of modern civilization. Disillusioned in the West by the happenings of the last war, he turned to India for inner light and spiritual strength for the fulfilment of his cherished dream. In his search for the verities of human life, he came into intimate touch with Indian philosophic thought, and was greatly influenced by it. Romain Rolland's monumental works on the lives of Shri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and Mahatma Gandhi, are an expression of his profound admiration for and indebtedness to such spiritual giants of India. In them he found the fulfilment of his own ideals of universal harmony and spiritual dynamism. Through these biographies he not only acquainted Europe with the teachings of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, but also presented the lacerated soul of the war-weary West with the balm of spiritual healing. He was a philosopher, poet, and mystic in one. He dedicated his life for the cause of world peace and the brotherhood of mankind. We hope the efforts of

this great savant will not fail to bear fruit. May his soul rest in peace.

#### MEDICAL MEN AND SOCIAL WELFARE

Prof. H. E. Sigerist of the Foreign Experts Medical Mission has drawn the attention of medical men in this country to the need for utilizing technical advance in medicine to the promotion of social welfare. In his Address delivered at the Madras Medical College he stressed the importance of sociology of medicine in the training of doctors who should be

not only men trained in the science of medicine, but social workers, educators, friends and helpers of their fellowmen, leading them to a healthier and happier life.

Medical education in India suffers from the same drawbacks as does general education with respect to ideals and training. Medical graduates passing out of the Universities find it difficult to earn a decent living outside the cities owing to the poverty in the villages. Hence little or no medical relief is available in the majority of villages. Besides, there is a great paucity of medical workers compared with the vast field to be served in India. It is necessary that the system of medical education should be suited to meeting the basic needs of the people at large. Hence Prof. Sigerist suggests that doctors should not rest content with curing diseases only, but that they should become active social workers, paying attention to prevention, sanitation, and the spreading of general health education.

Medical education would hereafter have to emphasize the preventive side. Preventive medicine must permeate the entire teaching of medicine, and new text books and laboratories would have to be devised in this behalf. . . . We must introduce sociological training in the curriculum. We must develop a sociology of medicine. . . . sociology of medicine taught through actual field work, students under training being put for a few months each year to work among the people.

Our doctors should be encouraged to become not only better physicians, but better and useful citizens. The learned Professor said that in Russia and Yugoslavia much advance had been made in training medical men in medico-social work, and in helping the people to know how to prevent disease and promote health. Such a task will prove undoubtedly more difficult in India where the majority of people in the villages are unable to read or write. Hence a greater responsibility rests on the few educated persons.

They have to work for the regeneration of India by becoming familiar with the social and economic conditions of the vast masses and by educating them and raising their standards of life by living and working in their midst.

#### A TIRADE AGAINST HINDUISM

Hinduism has allowed a great amount of liberty in religious and spiritual matters. Hindus have shown infinite tolerance towards other religions and faiths. But yet attempts are made to discredit Hinduism and Hindu scriptures, wrongly attributing to them the onus for social or sectarian prejudices. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, explaining his stand against the Vedas and the Gita at a party, is reported to have held that these books which showered insults on the 'depressed classes' and had thrown them into such a humiliating plight would never be held by them as their sacred and holy books. In his opinion the Bhagavadgita was a 'political' book, whose purpose was to raise Brahminism to a supreme position. It is unfortunate that a person like Dr. Ambedkar, occupying an eminent position today, is pleased to express himself in such words against the Hindu scriptures. We understand and sympathize with the feeling of utter dissatisfaction which has given rise to such expression. But unmerited condemnation of the scriptures is certainly not the way to get a wrong righted. The institution of caste, however irrational it may appear to many today, had its own good purpose to serve in the past; though in modern times it may have lost its noble aim of conserving and developing the best in every social group in harmony with national ideals. No Hindu scripture ever upheld caste derived from mere birth *only*. A man's caste was determined by his inherent *guna* and *karma*, viz., by the temperament and tendencies predominant in him, mainly derived from past births. The Bhagavadgita makes this point explicit, and does not support the claims of any one caste as against the others.

All men are not of the same nature, and all are not equally endowed with gifts of head and heart. Hence distinctions of a discriminatory nature between man and man, whether based on caste or wealth, exist in every society in some form or other. That part of the Vedas which embodies the spiri-

tual teachings of the ancient seers, viz., the Upanishads, has been cited as the highest authority by all Hindu teachers. Hinduism never recognized any caste or privilege in religion and spirituality. Any local custom or convention, prevailing in a section of Hindu society, is not Hinduism, and has not the sanction of the scriptures. The Upanishads have, in proclaiming the Vedantic truth of the existence of the same divinity in all beings, stood for the elimination of privilege. Hindu scriptures have unequivocally declared that all knowledge, all perfection is in every soul, irrespective of caste, creed, or colour. And the Bhagavadgita says,

He who looks upon the learned Brâhmaṇa, or the outcaste, upon the cow, the elephant, or the dog, with the same eye (of equality), he indeed is the sage, he is the wise man.

It is not the Hindu scriptures or their teachings that are responsible for provoking unfavourable criticism. But such practices as untouchability, privilege-claiming, and social persecution in the name of religion have been the causes of much of the insult that is showered on Hinduism. It is no doubt regrettable that even today the blot of untouchability is not completely removed from Hindu society. No true Hindu can honestly associate himself with such iniquity. No true Hindu scripture sanctions it. As a leader of his community, Dr. Ambedkar is quite right in voicing his grievances. But he should try his best to raise his community by improving their standard of education, and by raising their economic status. Automatically their position in the social and

body politic will be raised. But denunciation and destructive criticism will not prove helpful in achieving his object. Many caste Hindus, including well-known personalities, have been working for the upliftment of the Harijans, along constructive lines. Their experience, however, is encouraging. The President of the Harijan Sewak Sangh, Allahabad, writing in the *Indian Review* (November 1944) says,

A caste Hindu is prepared to listen to you provided you do not rub him the wrong way. . . . In the vast majority of cases we have succeeded in convincing them (caste Hindus) that untouchability is a stigma on Hindu society and we should try to remove it as speedily as possible. Invariably they have agreed. . . . You cannot convert anybody to your view either by riding a high horse or by wounding his deep-rooted susceptibilities. An average village Hindu is open to reason, and it depends on the tact and good sense of the speaker whether he will succeed in winning his sympathy. Our experience is extremely encouraging.

The Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita contain the sublimest teachings of the world. The Gita has a message even to the modern world. It is a message of harmony and peace, and not dissension which is the way of present-day ideologies. Decrying these teachings which are sacred to all classes of Hindus will not serve to bridge the gulf of social inequality. A wrong procedure may tend to take us away from the goal. In their own interest, and in the interest of the country as a whole, the higher classes will have to help the lower classes to get their legitimate rights. Only then will Hindus become strong in unity. The teachings of the scriptures will have to become a living force in our daily life.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**THE RENAISSANCE OF HINDUISM.** By D. S. SARMA. Published by the Hindu University, Benares. Pp. 680. Price Rs. 15 or 21 s.

This is an excellent publication of the Benares Hindu University in the Pratap Singh Gaekwad Library of Indian Philosophy and Religion series. The author deserves to be warmly congratulated for the success he has attained in giving a clear exposition and describing in simple language the Renaissance of Hinduism beginning from Ram Mohan Roy and progressing onwards.

The writer originally intended the book 'to form a companion volume' to his 'What is Hinduism?' but when he proceeded with the work he found

that 'the material for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was so abundant and interesting' that he thought it best to make this period the main theme of this volume and it was good that he did so.

The book starts with a careful and able Historical Introduction dealing with the various phases of Hinduism and dating from the Vedic period down to 1940 A.D.

Describing the period before coming into being of the Renaissance, the learned author says: 'The British supremacy was established over the whole of India after the subjugation of the Mahrattas and Sikhs and the government was transferred

from the East India Company to the Crown after the Mutiny'. India 'was at this time brought into the current of Modern European civilization and culture' when 'her own civilization and culture had been at the lowest ebb for over a hundred years, from about the middle of the eighteenth century. In that dark period, there was no new development in Hinduism and almost all indigenous arts languished and died. . . . The inrush of a totally different civilization put an end to all creative work for a time and an uncritical admiration for all things Western took possession of the mind of the educated classes coupled with contempt for things of native origin. . . . The zealous Christian Missionaries who never failed to point out their finger of scorn at our religious and social institutions were educators as well as crusaders.' They opened schools where they imparted the new secular knowledge, but they also poured contempt at our religion and taught of Christianity as the only true religion.

Such a state of affairs could not go on indefinitely if Hinduism was not to die a natural death. The soul of the country was aroused from its deep slumber and Hinduism rose to its feet. 'The innate vitality of that religion with its great and glorious past asserted itself. At first the revived faith was at its defence, rather cautious and timid in maintaining its position and inclined to compromise with the enemy. But soon it took the offensive, marched forward, even entered the hostile camp and asserted in ringing tones its right to live as one of the civilizing influences of mankind.' There arose in this period a number of saints and scholars who 'purified Hinduism by denouncing some of its later accretions, separated its essentials from its non-essentials, confirmed its ancient truths by their own experience and even carried its message to Europe and America'.

The pioneer of Modern Hindu Renaissance was Raja Ram Mohan Roy who like other prophets or teachers who followed him (viz., Justice Ranade, Swami Dayananda, Mrs. Annie Besant, Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, and Prof. Radhakrishnan, and all of whom are faithfully described in this volume), 'was a zealous Hindu, proud of India's past, proud of the achievements of his race and eager to conserve all that was good and great in his ancestral religion. He struck a note of universalism which we hear again and again in the teachings of the prophets of the new age,' and it is a note which was more particularly emphasised by Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and his great disciple Swami Vivekananda. The learned author is right when he says that this note of universalism is 'the most distinguishing note of the Hindu Renaissance of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is the fulfilment and realization of the universalism of the Upanishads.'

The author lucidly describes the various movements connected with the various prophets or teachers such as Brâhma Samaj with Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Prârthana Samaj with Justice Ranade, Arya Samaj with Swami Dayananda, Theosophical Society with Mrs. Annie Besant, Rama-

krishna movement with Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda, and lastly the Satyagraha movement with Mahatma Gandhi. It would not be possible in this short review to deal exhaustively with each movement and it can be said to the credit of the learned author that he has dealt with the various movements in a very able manner and has drawn conclusions which cannot be refuted. He gives a truthful account and a clear picture.

He has rightly pointed out that the leaders of this Renaissance were 'able to view their religion apart from the mythological, ritualistic and sociological forms in which it was embedded.' The success of Swami Vivekananda, and later of Prof. Radhakrishnan, in carrying the message of Hinduism to the Western nations 'was primarily due to their ability to interpret Vedanta as a religious philosophy independent of the Indian caste-system or mythology or rites and ceremonies'. . . . Social reform formed a large part of the present Renaissance. It started with it and has made great strides in this field although much remains to be done. But in the words of the author 'the ice has been broken, and the water has begun to flow' and further progress is only a question of time.

He has also made very sensible and pertinent observations about the future of the movement in the concluding portion of his book and they deserve careful attention. Speaking of the attitude of Hinduism towards Islam and Christianity he says that our policy towards them 'should be not one of absorption but of fraternization.' If these religions insist on conversion, as they must, we must, of course, claim the same right.

Lastly the author lays great emphasis on unity as the crying need of the hour. 'Lack of unity among Hindus' says he, 'has been the cause of all their misfortunes from time immemorial, and they should realize that not even a thousand Renaissances of Hinduism would help them, if they did not learn to unite and act as one unit.'

The book deserves to be widely read by all Hindus who are proud of their culture and the contributions that it has made and will yet make for the progress and the good of mankind.

D. D. PUNETHA

### BENGALI

PARAMARTHA-PRASANGA. BY SWAMI VIJAYANANDA. Pp. viii+168. *Udbodhan Kâryâlaya, Bagbazar, Calcutta.* Price (board) Rs. 1-12 As. (cloth) Rs. 2-4 As.

Spiritual knowledge is imparted in the manner of one torch enkindling another. That is, only a man of light can illumine another man. Anyone short of that is not only incapable of doing it but may, as it often happens, instead of helping the progress of those who seek his help, rather thwart it. For, in his case, it is like 'a blind man leading another blind man', as the Upanishads say. He is, according to Shri Ramakrishna's forceful, though rather quaint, metaphor, like a weak non-poisonous snake trying to swallow a frog.

which involves both the creatures in a long agonising process. A really competent teacher is, on the other hand, like a cobra which makes a quick and an almost comfortable job of it, both to itself and the frog.

Swami Virajananda, author of the book, is a teacher of the second kind. In addition to the special and the most-coveted advantage that he is a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, he is a rare veteran in the spiritual field, inasmuch as he has been in it for more than half a century. If anyone, it is he and men like him, who are competent to teach spiritual matters. And that he has been prevailed upon to let his thoughts, which are the outcome of his long and fruitful experience of spiritual life, appear in print, is a great achievement on which the publisher ought to be congratulated.

As the publisher points out in the preface, the book is rather esoteric, being specially meant for those who look up to him for spiritual guidance. But it can—undoubtedly will—prove immensely helpful also to those outside that circle, for it is, after all, a common goal that all spiritual aspirants seek and methods of reaching that goal, too, are necessarily similar. There are no idle and academical dissertations in the book ; there

are only practical hints such as will help to guide the steps of an aspirant through the mazes of spiritual life. Indeed, it is the practical value of the book that readily strikes a reader. Almost every difficulty that confronts one on the spiritual path has been anticipated and a practical as well as practicable solution has been offered as to how to circumvent it. Within the narrow compass of one hundred and sixty-eight pages is compressed such a treasure of spiritual information as only a very judicious and voluminous reading of books on spiritual subjects may yield.

One other merit of the book is that even a man ordinarily indifferent and callous to religion will, while going through it, feel tempted to begin the practice of religion rightaway, seeing how easy it is and how rich a harvest he may reap by it. This is because throughout the book there is a note of hope and good cheer as there ought to be. Unlike most other books of the kind it does not exaggerate difficulties that stand in the way of an aspirant. If it exaggerates anything at all, which of course it does not, it exaggerates the powers that lie hidden in him.

The book is really a wonderful guide in spiritual life, next only to a truly illumined teacher in the flesh.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### PRESIDENT'S TOUR

Srimat Swami Virajananda, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, was receiving, for some time past, earnest requests from numerous devotees and admirers to pay a visit to North and East Bengal and Assam. But he could not comply with their requests in consideration of his ill health. Latterly the invitations became so pressing that the Swamiji could not refuse them any longer and inspite of his indifferent health consented to undertake a tour of some of the branch centres of the Mission in those parts. Accordingly, on 29th November 1944, he started from the Ashrama at Shyamatala in the Himalayas, where he usually spends the larger part of the year. He halted for two days at Lucknow and then proceeded first to Katihar and from there to Dinajpur. To the great joy of the devotees he stayed at the latter place for over a week and then started for Gauhati in Assam. This was the first time that the Swami came to this province. He spent two very joyful days at Gauhati and saw the famous temple of the great Goddess Kamakhya, situated on a hill at a short distance from the town. Shillong was the next destination where he was very enthusiastically received by the devotees. After spending eight days at this capital town of Assam he left for Sylhet where people were eagerly awaiting his

arrival. The enthusiasm of the people reached its height when they saw the Swami and they did their best to make his stay comfortable there and also to benefit by his holy presence. The Swami stayed there for fifteen memorable days which were days of veritable spiritual feasts for the devotees. It was a sight to be seen when earnest seekers after truth came from long distances, all the way on foot, and with presents of fruits and other eatables on their head, to have a darshana of the Swami and be blessed by him.

The next place of visit was Dacca where the stay was the longest—for sixteen days. In 1899 the Swami paid his first visit to this place when he was sent by his great master, Swami Vivekananda, to preach the message of Vedanta here. His mission was a success. The Swami was thus, in his younger days, one of the pioneer workers at Dacca, who paved the way for a spiritual reawakening there. Now he is seventy-three and was glad to see the fruitful effects of that initial labour. He was highly pleased to recognize among the numerous visitors who came to see him some of the old friends and devotees whom he met at that time. All these sixteen days the Dacca Math presented an extremely lively sight and an exalting atmosphere.

The Swami was highly impressed in all the above places by the unbounded enthusiasm of the

people and their earnest hankering for a spiritual life. He was struck with wonder to witness how deep the message of Shri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda has gone into the heart of the people and how silently but surely it has been bringing about a new transformation in their life. In all the places people, not only local but from neighbouring places too, were pouring in from morning till night to pay their respectful homage to the august visitor and have his blessings. The Swami also received them kindly, listened to them patiently and enlightened their hearts by solving the problems of their spiritual life through suitable instructions and teachings. About 1,500 hankering souls, both man and women, and from all strata of society, were blessed with initiation by him.

In some places the public were very eager to present the Swami with civic receptions, but he dissuaded them on the ground of his ill health. Many a invitation to address gatherings or bless other public functions by his presence had to be refused on the same ground. But though the Swami himself did not address any public meeting he asked the other monks, who accompanied him in his tour, to hold classes and deliver discourses on religious topics. They were glad to obey his bidding. There were some good musicians also in the party and Bhajanas were held. Thus wherever the Swamiji went he created an atmosphere around him which was at once joyous and uplifting. People were greatly attracted by it.

Devotees from other places, namely, Silchar, Habiganj, Comilla, Mymensingh, Noakhali, Barisal, etc., were sending their earnest entreaties to the Swami to visit those places, but the condition of his health did not allow him to accept those invitations and prolong his journey further. He left Dacca for Narayanganj where he stayed for

over a day and then started for Belur Math and reached there on the 26th January. Thanks to the efforts of some earnest devotees and admirers because of which his journey was quite comfortable. He will stay now for some time at the Belur Math.

#### SWAMI PAVITRANANDA IN SOUTH INDIA

Swami Pavitrananda, President, Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, is in South India, visiting places of interest and branch centres of the Math and Mission there. He left Calcutta at the end of November last and reached Madras in the middle of December, visiting Waltair, Rajahmundry, and Tonuka en route. Leaving Madras soon after, he visited Nattarampalli, Bangalore, Mysore, places in Coorg, Ootacamund, Coimbatore, Trichur, Kaladi, Ernakulam, Alleppy, Quilon, Trivandrum, Cape Comorin, Madura, Rameswaram and Dhanushkoti, and arrived in Ceylon towards the end of January. He is expected to return to Calcutta by the middle of February.

#### REPORTS PUBLISHED

The following branches of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission have sent us their reports for the periods noted against each :

##### Ramakrishna Mission Students'

/Home, Madras	...	...	1944
Ramakrishna Mission Sevash-			
/rama, Silchar	...	...	1940-43
Ramakrishna Ashrama,			
Ootacamund	...	...	1944
Ramakrishna Ashrama,			
Trivandrum	...	...	Aug. 1943-Aug. 41

#### SHRI RAMAKRISHNA'S BIRTHDAY

The Birthday Anniversary of Shri Ramakrishna falls on the 14th February, 1945.

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. L

MARCH, 1945

No. 3



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निवोधत ।”

“Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI SHIVANANDA

BELUR MATH, 1929

The talk was about pilgrimage. A monk has just returned from a visit to Badrinarayan and other holy places.

Mahapurushji remarked : Visiting holy places is easy enough. Anyone who is a bit hardy can do it. But love of God, faith in Him—these are rare things. You see many monks who have visited the four Dhams\* on foot. They may have done more such feats. But how many of them have real devotion or real discrimination ? Of course I don't mean none of them have these. A few surely have. But a few—only a few. Progress in spiritual life is difficult. Specially so for those who have no living ideal. It becomes comparatively easy if one is lucky enough to come in touch with an ideal personality. Otherwise very few can decide on a goal and progress towards it. If one can lay a firm hold on life's ideal, then, by God's grace, one can gradually progress towards it. Truly all

depends upon God's grace. We were very fortunate that we came in touch with such a great personality (i.e., Shri Ramakrishna). Through our own experiences we have known how God is attained and how a man is transfigured after attaining God. He came as incarnation of God for this age and kindly brought us, too, with him. Is it small luck ? We have come in direct touch with God Himself. We have seen Him, have modelled our lives on Him. Thanks to this, attainment of God has been easy for us. We are blessed. Again, those who have not seen Thakur, have not had his holy contact, but have seen us and through us, are trying to grasp him, are fortunate compared with millions of other men and women. Would you believe it, God Himself came in human form, and that only the other day.

It all passed before our eyes like a pageant. What a fire of spiritual austerities he had kindled ! The warmth of that fire one can still feel. This is no ordinary age ; this is a most sacred age. In this age all will be easy for him who will accept Shri Ramakrishna, will travel along the spiritual path making him his ideal. In these days anyone fashioning himself after Shri Ramakrishna, casting his life in

\* The four monasteries founded by Shankaracharya at four distant points in India. To visit them is the most cherished aspiration of monks belonging to Shankaracharya's school. According to tradition, these are the Shringeri Mutt at Shringeri in S. India, the Govardhan Mutt at Puri in Orissa, the Jyotir Mutt at Badrinarayan in the Himalayas, and the Sarada Mutt at Dwarka in West India.

the mould of his, will find it easy to attain God. But how many can actually do it ?

The Monk : Maharaj, is it very easy to attain God ?

Maharaj : No, not so easy.

Saying this he began singing :

'Shyama, mother, you're flying your kites,  
Of a million, only one or two of them get free.  
And when that happens,

You laugh and clap your hands.'  
'Out of a thousand only a handful try to find me. And of those who try, only one or two succeed.' Realization of God is very difficult; without His special grace it is impossible. But if He is kind enough, darkness of a thousand years can be lighted up all at once. He is an ocean of mercy. Moved by man's sorrows He came in human form to save him. Else why should He have come ? He is full. What want has He ?

## RELIGION AND FREEDOM

BY THE EDITOR

*He who knows this Infinite, verily becomes one with it ; he crosses all the barriers of ignorance, sorrow, sin, and death, and becomes perfectly free.—Mundakopanishad.*

### I

Man is born everywhere in chains, innate or environmental, and yet aspires to freedom of all kinds. Every man considers freedom his birthright, but he finds that all nature, as well as human society, is in a conspiracy to bind him down to fixed forms of movement and conduct. All individuals and communities have in them this desire for freedom, for liberty to act, feel, and think as one likes, but it reaches its highest conscious expression only in civilized men.

The problem of freedom is one and indivisible whether we consider it in relation to man in his individual capacity or in his relation to society. For we do not get individuals except in society, nor do we get a society without individuals.

What do men seek ? At the body level, they seek satisfaction, complete or incomplete as the case may be, of their bodily needs. The needs of the flesh are indeed heavy, continual, and exacting. The more they are satisfied the more they flame up, like fire fed with petrol. Men want food, clothes, houses, sexual satisfaction, and, perhaps incidentally, children. All men, saints and sinners, rich and poor, are alike under the visible bondage of most of these bodily needs, if not of all. Hunger, the imperative need for food, is the driving force in the life of the majority of mankind. It is to this universal

need of physical sustenance that the Upanishads refer, when they speak of food as Brahman. There is no living creature but will be glad to have freedom from hunger and thirst. Men further desire also freedom from the inclemencies of cold and heat, sun and rain, in the form of shelter and clothes. As soon as these are satisfied men want the freedom for the satisfaction of their imperative instincts for marriage and parenthood. Herein the individual comes within the firmer grip of the collective or racial force that works in the world, the force which the ancient Hindus deified as Prajapati, the god of procreation, what modern scientists would call the biological principle of the reproduction of the species. Except perhaps at the human level, this biological impulse for reproduction of type is an imperious and overpowering necessity, when the individual reaches maturity; and at this stage comes the necessity for the young man or woman to recognize the function of family and society. Till the young boy or girl reaches the age of marriage, the purely physical needs of food and shelter and play may keep them engaged and contented. But with the reaching of the adult or mature stage, the new needs of parenthood make themselves felt, and if they are not satisfied lead to much painful frustration. So each individual wants the freedom to choose his partner in the biological business of parenthood.

## II

Most of these physical needs man shares with the lower animals. As a Sanskrit verse says: food, sleep, fear, and sexual satisfaction—men have these in common with the beasts. But what distinguishes men is their reason or capacity for acquiring knowledge. The very etymology of the word 'man', from the Sanskrit *man*, to think—indicates that human beings have this special power of reason or of acquiring knowledge, of developing ideas of good and bad, true and false. It is because of this special power placed in men's mature nature that human civilization has risen higher and higher in the evolutionary scale. Indeed it may be said that all that we prize in civilization is the result of the thinking and reasoning power of man applied to meet the problems facing him in the world. Increasing knowledge of the working of the forces in the universe has placed greater facilities in the hands of men for controlling the course of their own growth and evolution. So we find men struggling not for bread alone, like the beasts, but for the things of the intellect and the spirit. Economic and social freedom, political freedom, freedom of speech and movement, and freedom of thought and worship are all desired by men at this level of development.

Thus Indian leaders want freedom from the stranglehold of the British political and economic imperialism. Britain wants freedom from the menace of Japanese pan-Asianism which threatens to take away the sources of her sustenance, power, and glory by depriving her of India and other British possessions in the East. Russia and France want to be free for ever from the menace of Nazi militaristic brutality. The Americans want to free the Pacific Ocean and Asia from the darkening light of the Rising Sun. Nippon wants to free the helpless Asiatics from the jaws of the Lion, and the claws of the Eagle. The Russian Bear of Bolshevism wants the freedom to tear to pieces the bloated honeycombs of the capitalistic nations. Poor China prays for freedom as much from the tentacles of the Japanese Octopus as from the bonds of silver with which America would like to bind her to her side. Even battered France, and pulverized Holland and Belgium, want the freedom to have back their pre-war colonies!

In other spheres besides the international, we find the same desire to be free from dis-

abilities imposed upon us or to have the freedom to impose disabilities upon others. The white races want to keep at arm's length the black and yellow races, because they consider their pigmentation or their frizzy hair or stubby flat nose or pin-hole eyes to be distinctly inferior to their own. Thus Asiatics are excluded from any immigration worth the name into America. Australia, that babe of barely two centuries, will not admit the centuries-old Chinese or Japanese or Indians into its vast empty spaces. While South Africa, after having used Indian labour for developing the country, now wants to drive them away from its shores as if they had the plague. And an even more amazing suggestion was made by somebody in America that the Negroes from that country should be sent back in a body to their original homes in Africa! Hitler's example of Jew-baiting seems to be contagious.

In the religious sphere also we see the same diversity and contradictoriness in the desire for freedom. In freedom of worship Christianity and Muhammadanism include the right to convert others to their own forms of belief. The milder and tolerant Hindu wants to be freed from the killing attentions of these saviours of his soul, who will like to apply the unction of salvation by force to the souls of others unable to resist them. The theologians offer us freedom from misery and pain and all the imperfections of this world in a heaven where we shall also become angels or *devas* and have, to our hearts' content, every happiness minus the pain of satiety. If we do not believe what the learned theologians say and accept their mysterious dogmas as gospel truth, they threaten us with eternal baking in hellfire. So many people lying hypnotized under the spell of the dualistic creeds want to be free from the fear of falling into hell.

The individual fears poverty, disease, old age, death of his beloved ones as well as his own, and wants to be free from these calamities. President Roosevelt canvasses for world support by promising to work for freedom from want, freedom from fear, freedom of speech and movement, freedom of worship, and a host of other freedoms, though in the serving out of this ambrosia of freedom, the claim of the coloured. Like Vishnu in the form of Mohini in Hindu mythology, he will deal out the ambrosia of happiness and security for all, though the secret understanding seems

to be that the coloured races are to be put off from their share after the work is done.

The labouring classes want freedom from the tyranny of the capitalists, the peasants want to be freed from the exhausting exactions of the landlords and the governments, and the unprivileged like the Depressed Classes in India want the restoration of their human privileges. The Muslims want freedom from the menace of absorption by the Hindus. The Hindus want no bifurcation of their dear Hindusthan, and compare the Muslims to the false mother in the fable, who would agree to cut the child, whose parentage was in dispute, into two.

### III

Thus at the intellectual level, it so happens that each individual or group or nation wants to be free from the control of others in all matters. The greater the intellectual development, the greater seem the differences of opinion. There is no expert but has his own opinion. This desire for freedom, so dear to all seems to have no end. For what we consider freedom now, we consider slavery the next day; what one man or nation considers freedom another considers to be slavery.

In spite of all this apparent confusion about the idea of freedom, the inner urge for freedom is making higher and broader paths for its expression. Thus in the West this urge has taken more explicitly the form of fighting for political freedom. Through the centuries the West has been trying to perfect some political machinery by which the individual can be saved from absolute rule. Western people are always trying to throw off any one man ruling over them, and they are gradually advancing to higher and higher democratic ideas and have developed the idea of physical liberty,—though selfishly they sometimes consider such things applicable only to white races, and try to persuade themselves that the coloured races have to be under some form or other of autocratic government. In America in addition to political they have developed social freedom to a considerable extent. In the East, and especially in India, we developed the idea of religious and spiritual freedom. What the West considers wisdom the East considers folly and *vice versa*. Christ, an Asiatic, said that it profited little to gain the whole world if one lost one's soul. The West thought, first let us secure this world, and

then we shall see about the other. Easterners, thinking of God and the soul and the freedom from the pains of this human existence so abundantly evident in the form of frequent famines and pestilences, neglected this world as far as possible, and tried to forget it in the search for spiritual freedom. As Max Müller says:

The Hindu enters the world as a stranger; all his thoughts are directed to another world; he takes no part even when he is driven to act, and even when he sacrifices his life, it is to be delivered from it.

They (the Hindus) shut their eyes to this world of outward seeming activity, to open them full to the world of thought and rest. Their life was a yearning for eternity; their activity was a struggle to return to that divine essence from which this life seemed to have severed them.

The best minds of the West bent their minds to get freedom from nature outside man. The wise men of the East devoted themselves to the problem of the freedom of the soul, to get free from nature inside man. The West began with the assumption that all was matter; it found matter evaporating into force; and on still closer analysis modern scientists are more and more inclined to believe that matter and force all merge into consciousness. Max Planck says:

Consciousness cannot be explained in terms of matter and its laws. I regard consciousness as fundamental. I regard matter as derivative from consciousness. We cannot get behind consciousness. Everything that we talk about, everything that we regard as existing, postulates consciousness.

Professor Schrodinger also says :

Although I think life may be the result of an accident, I do not think that of consciousness. Consciousness cannot be accounted for in physical terms. For consciousness is absolutely fundamental. It cannot be accounted for in terms of anything else.

The Indian sages also found out the same truth that *Chit* alone was the final thing. They called it more properly *Sut-Chit-Ananda*, existence-consciousness-bliss. Just as scientists, initially running away from everything except matter, found that ultimately all was but consciousness, so the saints running away from all earthly things found at last that the spirit or God which they sought was in their own hearts, in the hearts of all living things, nay, in every atom of this Universe. As the mystics say, 'All is God'; सर्वं ज्ञातिष्ठ तत्. The One has become matter and mind and

anything else left besides. As Swami Vivekananda says :

Multiplicity of gods gave place to one God of the universe, and in the Upanishads there is a rebellion against that one God. Not only was the idea of so many governors of the universe ruling their destinies unbearable but it was unbearable to them that there should be one person ruling this universe. . . . The idea grows and grows, until it strikes its climax. In almost all of the Upanishads we find the climax coming at the last, and that is the dethroning of this God of the universe. The personality of God vanishes, the impersonality comes. God is no more a person, no more a human being, however magnified and exaggerated, but God has become an embodied principle in us, in every being, immanent in the whole universe. (*The Freedom of the Soul*).

Westerners are seldom tired of saying that the East is backward, has not got the knowledge which the West has got, and so is not fit for political and economic freedom. The East says the West has but got a partial knowledge, a knowledge of the *apara vidya* that brings in its train only further misery and ultimate destruction; whereas it (the East) has got the knowledge of Brahman, the *para vidya*, the knowledge that frees the soul absolutely from all bondage. We believe that in spite of its present comparative economic and political decadence, the East is pursuing a surer tract to the goal of complete freedom. It is good to have political and economic freedom, which often makes easier the path to spiritual freedom. Nay, to the vast majority of mankind, freedom in political,

economic and social matters is really necessary before they can rise to the heights of spiritual freedom. But in neglecting these forms of outer freedom the East has erred, we are inclined to think, on the safer side. The West will go to rack and ruin unless it learns that, without spiritual freedom, all other freedoms lose their substance and become but further sources of bondage. This it must learn from the example and precepts of the East. It must shed its obsessions of racial and material superiority, and learn, as the Emperor Asoka learned, that happiness lies not in having the freedom to slay and exploit, like the beasts of prey of the forest, but in serving all mankind, and enabling everybody to develop along his own lines of growth. Nature abhors a dead uniformity.

Freedom is ever man's goal. He seeks it ever. His whole life is a struggle for it. But freedom from what and for what? In the answer to such questions the East has shown a greater wisdom than the West. As Swami Vivekananda says :

Blessedness, eternal peace, arising from perfect freedom is the highest concept of religion, underlying all the ideas of God in Vedanta,—absolutely free existence, not bound by anything, no change, no nature, nothing that can produce a change in them. The same freedom is in you and in me and is the only real freedom.

Societies and nations should be so organized that each individual gets the maximum facilities for attaining such complete freedom.

## UPANISHADIC MEDITATION\*

By SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA

### *Upásanā and Devotion*

We hinted earlier that *upásanā* has in it many elements of devotion, *bhakti*. It is not mere thought; there is scope for emotion and volition as well. Ideas are to be adhered to with determination, and will is to be sustained by faith. And the whole effort is to be sweetened by love—love for a Personal God sometimes, but more often love for a higher ideal which is nothing but *sachchidánanda*. In consonance with the *bhakti* schools, the Upanishads recognize God as love. For they say, 'Raso vai sah—He is indeed Love';

'Kam Brahma, Kham Brahma—Brahman is Bliss, and Bliss is infinite'; and 'All these beings come from Bliss, after birth they live through Bliss, and they move towards and enter into Bliss.' An example of meditation on personality can be cited from the *Chhāndogya Upanishad* where the Divine Presence in the sun is meditated on. His beard is golden, his hair is golden, upto the tips of his nails everything is golden. His eyes are red as lotuses. This golden Being resides in the sun, and He is

\* Concluded from the February issue.

above all impurities. The *Mundakopanishad* speaks of the Cosmic Person as having fire as His head, the sun and moon as His eyes, the Vedas as His voice, the earth as His legs, and so on. In the Upanishads there is also mention of *tamayatra*, i.e., becoming united through and through with God. The *Mundaka Upanishad* teaches a beautiful *upāsanā* based on *Om* where it reveals the real mechanism for the concentration of mind on God:

Taking in hand the great bow which is the great weapon presented in the Upanishads, fix on it an arrow that has been sharpened through meditation. Then with a mind wholly captivated by His thought, do thou draw the string of the bow fully and hit the target which is no other than the Reality represented by *Om*. The *Om* is the bow, the mind is the arrow, Brahman is the target. It is to be hit with concentration and then one should become unified with the target just like an arrow.

As it may be naturally inferred, this kind of devotional *upāsanā* was often combined with prayer to God both in His personal and impersonal aspects. In the *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad* (III. 6) the devotee supplicates Shiva thus:

O Shiva, do Thou make innocuous the arrow that Thou hast taken in hand for shooting. Do not harm my relatives and this world.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to such prayer for worldly welfare there is also fervid prayer for moral and spiritual uplift, such as,

From evil lead me to good ; from darkness lead me to light ; from death lead me to immortality.<sup>2</sup>

In the *bhakti* school of thought there are often meditations of God based on the meaning of the letters of His name. The Upanishads also abound in such meditations. Among the so-called later Upanishads in which the *bhakti* element is strikingly in evidence, the *Gopala-purvatāpaniya Upanishad* says:

'Krishi' implies the earth, and 'na' implies bliss. Their combination means Krishna who is Supreme Brahman.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> यामिन् गिरिशन्त हस्ते विभर्यस्तंत्रे ।

शिवा गिरिच र्ता कुरु मा हिंसीः पुरुणं जगत् ॥

<sup>2</sup> असतो मा सद्गमय तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय ।—*Brihadāraṇyaka Upanishad*,

I. iii. 28.

<sup>3</sup> कृषिर्भूवाचकाशदो नक्ष निवृत्तवाचकः ।

तयोरेक्ष्यं परं प्रश्न कृष्ण इत्यभिधीयते ॥

Similarly the older Upanishads prescribe *upāsanās* based on the meaning of letters and suggestiveness of sound. The *Chhāndogya* (VIII. iii. 3) says that *hridaya* is a name of God, for the derivative meaning is *hridi-ayam*—He is in the heart. And the *Brihadāraṇyaka* (V. iii. 1) elaborates this *upāsanā* thus: 'This is Prajāpati—this heart (intellect). It is Brahman, it is everything. *Hridaya* (heart) has three syllables. "Hri" is one syllable. To him who meditates as above, his own people and others bring (presents). "Da" is another syllable. To him who meditates thus, his own people and others give (their powers). "Ya" is another syllable. He who meditates as above goes to heaven.'

It may be remarked in passing that such devotional ideas, prayers, and meditations are also found in abundance in the *samhitās*. The *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad*, which is counted among the older Upanishads, uses the word *bhakti* in its usual sense (VI. 23). Besides, there are instructions for *japa*, and reference to grace : 'यदेव एष वृत्तते तेन लभ्य—by him is He realized to whom He is graceful' (*Kathopanishad*, I. ii. 23), and 'वदेप्रसादात्' and 'धातुः प्रसादात्'—'through the grace of God' (*Shvetāshvatara Upanishad*, VI. 21, III. 20). The presence of these elements in the Vedas demolishes the theory that *bhakti* is a *paurāṇic* development. But we cannot pursue this topic further. Suffice it to say that *upāsanās* of the devotional type are found scattered in many Upanishads. But the Upanishads did not stop even with this; they pursued their task still further. Beyond Personal God they visualized an Impersonal Entity which transcends everything; and towards this they addressed their untiring steps. For they discovered quite early that 'Infinity indeed is happiness. There can be no real bliss in limited things. The highest bliss is identical with infinity.'<sup>4</sup> Moreover, Reality cannot be different from the meditator.<sup>5</sup>

#### Meditation through Self-identification

And this brings us to a unique characteristic of the Upanishads that can be met with, perhaps, nowhere else in the world. The Upanishads not only searched for the Insi-

<sup>4</sup> यो वं भूमा तस् दुखम् नाश्ये दुखमस्ति भूमेव दुखं—*Chhāndogya Upanishad*.

<sup>5</sup> नेदं यदिवसुपासते—*Kenopanishad*, I. 5.

nite, but they found It to be identical with the Self in all. They first realized सब वस्तुत तत् and then अहं ब्रह्मामि—first 'Brahman is all this,' and then 'I am Brahman.' The *Brihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* poses the question,

Men think, 'Through the knowledge of Brahman we shall become all. Well, what did that Brahman know by which It became all?'

And the answer is,

This self was indeed Brahman in the beginning. It knew only itself as 'I am Brahman'. Therefore it became all. And whoever among the Gods knew It, also became That; and the same with sages and men (I. iv. 9-10).

And so the task before the Upanishads was how to prepare the aspirants for that realization of unity. As a potent means to this they hit upon *ahamgraha upāsanā* in which the self is deliberately identified with different aspects of Brahman or with the Qualified Brahman Itself. The aspirant thinks of himself as Brahman.

Thus in one meditation *Virāt* or the Cosmic Person is thought of as food which is raised by stages, to the cosmic plane where everything is seen to merge in its cause which is considered to be the eater of food. This final eater again is no other than *Virāt*, and the eating, too, is *Virāt*. When thus everything has been identified with *Virāt*, and cause and effect have lost their duality, the meditator identifies himself with the non-dual *Virāt*. This in brief is what is known as the *saṁvarga-vidyā* or the meditation on the mergence of everything in the Cosmic Person which is no other than the Self.<sup>6</sup> There is also another *upāsanā* based on the *Gāyatri* which is taken as a symbol of Brahman and is shown to be as all-inclusive and infinite as Brahman. The meditator then identifies himself with this *Gāyatri-Brahman*. 'All beings that exist are indeed *Gāyatri*. *Vāk* (i.e., speech) indeed is *Gāyatri*, for *Vāk* indeed sings (i.e., utters) all these beings and protects them.<sup>7</sup> That which has been spoken of as Brahman is indeed in the space outside this body. The space inside is indeed the same as the space outside. The space in the body is the same as the space within the body. This space-

<sup>6</sup> *Chhāndogyopanishad*, IV. iii.

<sup>7</sup> This is the derivative meaning of *Gāyatri*, which comes from the roots *gai*, to sing, and *trai*, to protect.

<sup>8</sup> *Chhāndogya Upanishad*, III. xii; vide also *Brihadāraṇyaka Upanishad*, V. xiv.

Brahman is infinite.'<sup>8</sup> Similarly also in other cases. The highest *upāsanā* is reached where Brahman is presented as identified with everything that is good, noble, and beautiful, and the meditator then thinks himself to be no other than Brahman thus qualified.

The Upanishadic seers were convinced very early of the efficacy of meditation and mental resolve. The *Chhāndogya* says,

Meditation is indeed higher than conviction. The earth is as it were deep in meditation. The sky is engaged in meditation; heaven, water, mountains, men, gods, are all in meditation. Men get their uplift through meditation. So meditation is Brahman.

And about faith the Upanishad says,

Man is identified with his faith. As he believes so he becomes. So must he have faith.<sup>10</sup>

These two sayings reduced to practicality could not but give rise to the kinds of meditation we have been considering and particularly so to the *ahamgraha upāsanās*.

The long and short of it is that the Upanishadic seers did not rest satisfied with an objective direction of the mind as it is usual in the path of devotion and duty, or subjective withdrawal as it is usual in Yoga. They combined the two processes and reaped the highest benefit in the form of *aparokshā-nubhuti* or the immediate realization of the Self as Brahman, of the microcosm as the macrocosm. Their life's goal lay not in the mere realization of an isolated Self, but in identification with God in His fullness—in His transcendence and immanence.

It is this final objective that gave the direction to *upāsanā*, which was not allowed to be alienated from life, but life was to be spiritualized through it. It is in this realistic attitude leading to the highest realization that the present-day worth of Upanishadic *upāsanā* lies.

<sup>9</sup> सबकर्मा सबकामः सबगन्धः सबरसः सर्वमिदमभ्यान्तो—  
सबक्यनादर एष म आत्मा अन्तहृदय पूरद् ब्रह्म—

He who is the cause of all effects, who is the source of all (good) desires, all (good) smells, all (good) essences, is the pervader of all this. He is without speech, (i.e. organs) and passions. He resides in the lotus of (my) heart and is my Self. He is Brahman.—*Chhāndogya Upanishad*, III. xiv. 4.

<sup>10</sup> अथ खलु क्रतुमयः पुरुषो यथा क्रतुस्मिल्लोके पुरुषो

भवति तथेतः प्रेत्य भवति स क्रतुं कुर्वीत—*ibid.*, III.

*Classes of Upāsanā*

Next I propose to deal in brief with the different classes of *upāsanā* as this will clear our ideas about this word. I have already spoken of *Brahmopāsanā* and *abrahmopāsanā*, of *ahamgrahopāsanā* and *samvargopāsanā*. Of *Brahmopāsanā*, however, I have given you only one aspect, viz meditation on Personal God or Qualified Brahman. But there is a school of Vedantists who think that it is possible to meditate on the Absolute Brahman as well. Most Vedantists would not agree with this, since the Absolute Brahman cannot be the content of any thought or meditation. When properly analysed it would seem that the controversy hinges on the meaning we give to the word *nididhyāsana*. If by this word we mean ordinary meditation, then surely there can be no *upāsanā* of the Absolute Brahman, for howsoever we may try we can have no image, concept, or psychosis in our minds higher than that of the Qualified Brahman. If, on the other hand, *nididhyāsana* means meditation of the higher order as defined by Sureshwaracharya we may have meditation on Absolute Brahman; but for clarity of thought and expression we shall be well advised not to call it *upāsanā* but *nididhyāsana*, not a form of mental activity but a flow of conviction.

From another standpoint Shankaracharya places the *upāsanās* under three heads. First, those which are connected with sacrifices etc. actually being performed, *angāvabaddha*, and are calculated to heighten the results of the sacrifices; for according to the Vedic people, though sacrifices are efficacious by themselves, when they are conjoined with meditation they lead to greater results. Secondly, there are those meditations which are not connected with actual sacrifices nor with Brahman, but are calculated to lead to heaven or yield other cherished results. Thirdly, there are the *Brahmopāsanās*. In 'इष्टमवगः साम—look on the *Rig* as the earth and the *sāman* as fire,' we have an example of the first class. And in looking on death and suffering, etc. as penance, described earlier, we have an example of the second class. Similarly the *Brihadāraṇyaka* begins with a meditation based on the horse sacrifice which may be resorted to either by those who are actually engaged in the sacrifice or by those who for

some reason cannot do so. The result, however, is the same in both cases.

There are again two kinds of *upāsanā*—*Brahmopāsanā* and *pratikopāsanā*—direct meditation of Brahman, and indirect meditation based on symbols. A *pratika* is a symbol such as a *śālagrāma* or an image. The ideas of the deities to be meditated on are fastened on these symbols and images. But the old philosophers were careful to warn us that there can be no direct meditation of God so long as the mind hovers in the plane of symbols. It is only when we can transcend the grosser world that we are vouchsafed a higher realization of the Deity.

The emblematical meditations are of two different kinds—*sampadupāsanā* and *adhyāsopāsanā*. When we take up a symbol of lower order and through similarity superimpose on it the qualities, etc. of a higher thing, we have *sampadupāsanā* or meditation based on similarity, through which we think not on the lower order of things but on the higher ones which the lower things symbolize.<sup>11</sup> In fact, the lower things are here raised through similarity to their higher correlates where they find their fulfilment. Thus in the *Bhāmati* we read: 'The Vishvedevas, who are innumerable, have a similarity with the infinite mental modifications. Therefore the Vishvedevas are superimposed on the mind; and the mind itself is considered as though non-existing, the Vishvedevas having the pride of place. As a result of such a meditation one attains the infinite worlds. But in *adhyāsopāsanā* the symbol itself predominates and on it are superimposed the qualities, etc. of the deity, as for instance, "Think on the mind as Brahman," or "The sun is Brahman—this is the instruction."'

*Om* may be used as a symbol of God, and through this we can get *adhyāsopāsanā*. Similarly the heart-meditation, etc. may be accepted as symbols of Brahman. An example of *sampadupāsanā* can be taken from the *Brihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* where the horse in a horse-sacrifice is thought of as *Prajāpati*, the Cosmic Person. 'The head of the sacrificial horse is the dawn, its eye the sun, its vital force the air, its open mouth the fire called *Vaishvānara*, and

<sup>11</sup> आरोप्यप्रधाना सम्पूर्ण आचिहानप्रधानोऽध्यासः—  
Kalpataru on *Brahma-Sutras*. I. i. 4

the body of the sacrificial horse is the year. Its back is heaven, its belly the sky, its hoof the earth, its sides the four quarters, its members the four seasons,' and so on. One wonders at the wide sweep of the imagination and the all-comprehensive will and intellect which want to link up the most insignificant thing with the Highest Reality. We are told that through this meditation, one becomes identified with *Prajāpati*, a result which is as high as that obtainable through the horse-sacrifice itself. The power of thought is here fully recognized and meditation is given a

status at least as high as the highest sacrifice.

We have thus given some indication of what the *upāsanās* are and how they form an integral part of every-day life—that is to say, a life devoted to higher ideals and not merely to sordid worldly things. We have also sought to impress on the readers the fact that these *upāsanās* are not so far removed from modern life as some would have us believe. If we have succeeded in this we shall feel our present endeavour fully recompensed.

## AMERICANS LOOK TO INDIA

BY ELIZABETH DAVIDSON

The American nation was born of faith in man and the desire for freedom. Out of and in revolt against the oppression and poverty of life in the feudal states of Europe, there arose a tide of liberalism and belief in human dignity and brotherhood which was to span the Atlantic and create a new society. In Europe the same impetus gradually changed the established order of things, but it was greatly handicapped by the jealous ambitions of the military and ruling classes. America is not merely an extension of Europe; here the dreamers and doers joined hands in a genuine search for a way of life in which each individual could reach his highest stature.

Although the America of today is regarded as shallow and materialistic, spiritual values were not absent in the founding of the country. When Jefferson stated in the Declaration of Independence 'that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,' he was giving voice to the American dream. This American dream is still evolving : it appears in various forms in the literature and political history of this country.

During the first hundred years of American history all the great leaders of the nation—Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln—and the colonists and patriots were brought up in the Christian tradition. Study of the Bible formed the basis of early education, and though these leaders were able to outgrow the con-

fines of sect and creed, as no single church was permitted to establish its authority in the rapidly expanding life of the country, the simple words of Christian love and brotherhood left their impress on their thought and inspired much that was noble and virtuous in American life. The Quakers under William Penn, the Puritans and the Moravians, the Mormons and the Unitarians, formed earnest though sometimes bigoted religious communities. The religious life was considered of sufficient importance to be included in the Bill of Rights; freedom of worship was permanently established along with political and economic liberties in the Constitutional amendments.

The abolition of slavery after the Civil War may be thought of in a deeper way than the merely humanistic righting of a social injustice. The word 'freedom' again recalls the American dream: the opportunity given each human being to evolve to his highest stature—physical, mental, spiritual. Free education had already given the common man far greater opportunities than ever before in the realm of mental enlightenment. During this period Emerson and Thoreau were captured by the immense vistas of Vedic thought. There is a kinship between 'equality' and 'oneness of existence'—the latter being an extension and intensification of the former. 'Equality,' 'brotherhood,' 'oneness'—these form a natural sequence in human sympathy and understanding. Walt Whitman's poems are evidence of the infiltration of a greater

consciousness into American culture at this time.

If one appears to search in vain for the next phase of the 'dream' during the period of industrial expansion and scientific scepticism that followed the Civil War, one must also remember that growth does not proceed in a straight line. Greed and materialism have always been enemies of spiritual aspiration. Modern materialism has become so menacing expressing itself in world exploitation, mass production, technology, and war—that counter currents of equal magnitude in the realm of spirit must arise. The meaning of 'freedom', so essential to the American dream, demands perennial reinterpretation to give it life and value. A characteristic of this country is that the effort is constantly being made to remould society according to the changing values recognized by the individual. Wher- ever a bondage is met with, comes the effort to break through, to expand and immediately to share the new experience with the entire community. In principle and aspiration, no one is limited socially, economically, intellectually, or in spiritual endeavour. In practice, this perpetual rebellion has led to chaos. The effect of selfishness and greed, of national and international bargaining, makes ideals appear an empty mockery and we are often startled by our own hypocrisy. But the aspiration remains genuine. And in fact, the counter currents in the realm of spirit, the challenge to materialism, became a reality at the close of the century. The Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893, an outcome of the American dream of universal brotherhood and understanding, brought us the message of a far greater freedom from India.

When Swami Vivekananda spoke to the Americans, his message met with instantaneous response, not just because of the appreciation of Vedic thought by Emerson, Thoreau, and Walt Whitman, but because of the American aspirations which the Swami rekindled. Here was a man capable of re-interpreting the meaning of freedom, not as had been our custom, by discovering and destroying further external bondages, but by turning the eyes within to a new world of even greater possibility in which absolute freedom was the goal, and complete oneness of all beings the experience. 'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divine within, by controlling nature, external

and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy, by one, or more, or all of these—and be free.' This was the ancient Declaration of Independence that India could share with us, and is sharing with us through ever widening channels of contact.

Do we realize the urgent need of this contact? Our country, the entire Western hemisphere, is facing a great cultural crisis. The devastation of war and accompanying hatred has reached its climax. Not only the principles of democracy but all relationships between man and man, man and the universe, are being overpowered by the forces of destruction let loose by a purely materialistic interpretation of life. India holds in her possession the formula most needed to save us from annihilation. Whereas, since the days of Greece, Western emphasis has been on external values and pleasures, India has lived and survived under conditions of great poverty and oppression by setting the highest store by inner verities. Our eyes are just opening to the significance of a deeper mental and spiritual enlightenment. We faintly perceive that before we can attempt any kind of perfection in the outer world, which is so obviously created more by our thought than by our deed, we must lift up and cleanse the world of thought itself. Thought is the pre-cursor of every deed. Though our deeds are apparently swept away in time, our ways of thinking persist. Hence our despair for the future, unless we submit ourselves to a re-education of spirit.

Swami Vivekananda has presented to the West, in modern language and symbol, the entire range of Indian thought and faith. To a world torn by individualistic passion comes the soothing message of oneness of existence, of peace, contemplation, higher knowledge, and spiritual perfection. The mighty outgoing forces unleashed by science and technology can be held in check by an equally mighty faith in the divine heritage of peace and blessedness which man carries within himself. Religion, which has so nearly been discarded, can reassert its true relationship to human needs in the words of the Swami: 'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divine within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy, by one, or more, or

all of these—and be free. *This is the whole of religion.* Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details.'

Perhaps the greatest contribution to modern thinking India brings to us through Vivekananda, is the reminder that only by means of meditation and prayer—great virtues come to life. With all our materialism we have still the lingering desire for goodness but we have lost the method of bringing such things as goodness, beauty, and peace into our daily experience. In the techniques of Yoga, Swami Vivekananda describes the ancient disciplines laid down by the Hindu seers, which purify the mind and prepare it for inner vision and self-knowledge. Discrimination between the permanent and impermanent, detachment from the ties of egotism and emotion, renunciation of whatever is harmful to our ideal, and patient practice are among the steps to freedom. The same orderly process which science follows to disclose the nature of matter by means of accurate and dispassionate observation and experiment has its exact parallel in the system of self-analysis used in India now and for ages past. These principles and practices have bestowed upon the gifted people of the East a mental hygiene we might well envy. Had our religion adapted itself to similar scientific means, we should have kept under control the forces of evil, the passions and selfishness which have brought on the present fury of mechanized war.

The wonder of it is that to the practical American there comes from India not only this promise of a greater goodness and freedom, but the actual example in modern times of men, or rather saints, thus free. Many Americans, even the simple men of the street, have already been stirred by the life and utterances of Mahatma Gandhi. How much more deeply they are being moved by a closer study of Swami Vivekananda's life and that of his Master Shri Ramakrishna as illustration and embodiment of the teachings of Vedanta! Since the publication in America of the 'Gospel of Shri Ramakrishna', numerous souls have taken refuge in the loving and completely enlightened personality that comes to life in its pages. Here was a man every particle of whose being was filled with God-consciousness, who was incapable of seeing evil in others, and who radiated

love for all, without any national or geographical limits. Seeing through his eyes and listening to his words we can believe that ideal spiritual life is always possible and is not the monopoly of any particular age or religious sect; it is the heritage of all.

'Freedom' and 'the heritage of all': these words arouse a nostalgia for the idealism of the past in every American heart. A certain simplicity and guileless faith, part of our very nature, venerates greatness and deeply trusts the true man of God. His words are tangible facts that can be verified. To think is to speak, to speak is to act, and if a single human being can reach freedom and perfection, then you and I can try to do the same. This faith is the core of American life even today. It may appear childish and egotistic, but it is not difficult, in a country that has been self-reliant in all its activities, to fan the spark of aspiration into a passionate effort to attain a still higher goal.

If Americans look to India for the re-education needed to achieve true freedom and wish to benefit by her religion and philosophy, we must clearly keep in mind the four essential points of Vedanta: 'the Oneness of Existence, the Divinity of Man, the Unity of God, and the Harmony of Religions.' Vedanta declares that the entire universe is one, not only as a stretch of matter or idea, but as indivisible spirit. As inner knowledge ripens, the multiplicity of names and forms created by our ignorance and egocentricity vanishes into a unity which comprehends all humanity as well as all objects, animate and inanimate. We can perceive all beings as our very self; our sympathy and understanding enfolds all. This knowledge alone can heal the wounds of centuries of mortal conflict between men and nations.

In the Divinity of Man, the American dream of human dignity can find its ultimate fulfilment; all thought of sin and weakness will cease. We shall then discover in ourselves the source of joy and blessedness, eternal, indestructible, infinite, and immortal. In spirit we find ourselves pure and perfect; and as spirit, man is one with God.

God is one and indivisible: the God that is defined as the goal of different religions is only the highest reading of the Absolute by the finite human mind. According to differences of environment and education God has

been given different names and attributes, but in His very infinity God is one.

In the actual experience of Shri Ramakrishna and of the seers of old who proclaimed the message of Vedanta, there is a complete harmony of religions. The Christian, the Jew, the Hindu, and the Moslem can and will reach the same ultimate illumination of soul, though following different paths. The one thing needful is earnestness and reverence for one's own faith.

Swami Vivekananda has set before us the ultimate ideal of love and service, an ideal that alone can raise the masses the world over. In his words we must indeed consecrate our lives to God : not only to the God of our inner experience, but also to God in the form of the poor, the ignorant and the wicked, the weak and the helpless. He also teaches us a new freedom in our work : now we work

as slaves, being depressed by our failure and elated by the success of our efforts. When we consecrate our work to the service of God, to the service of humanity as worship, He will accept both the success and the failure ; and in place of slavery we can enjoy a quiet mind in the midst of great activity.

When the American dream and the Indian ideal of life are joined, both countries will benefit. America may bring her smaller gifts of human dignity, social equality, and physical well-being to the common man. But India will still our restlessness with the experience of inner peace, quench our passions and desires with the soothing effect of spiritual discipline and renunciation, and arrest our search for material expansion by giving us a glimpse of infinite bliss, the knowledge of our divine inheritance.

## MONISM, QUALIFIED MONISM, AND DUALISM : A RE-SYNTHESIS

BY DEWAN BAHADUR K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI

How does it happen that Shri Shankara who was the teacher of *nirguna* Brahman was an ardent worshipper of Vishnu? Is there any inherent incompatibility between philosophic monism and religious worship of God? Why did Shri Ramanuja and, later yet, Shri Madhva move away from such an attitude and give us different world-views? Is it impossible to re-synthesize their interpretations of life and re-combine the colours of the spectrum into the white light? There was a time when Advaitins and Vaishnavas had intermarriages as in the instance of Appaya Dikshita's grandfather and grandmother. Later on intermarriage disappeared, and yet later interdining, too, vanished.

It is the Advaitic doctrine of *māyā* that has roused the ire of the so-called dualists. It is the old battle of Being and Becoming in ever new forms in ever new theatres. Can there be perpetual change without a basic permanent changeless principle of which change can be predicted as a manifestation in the plane of relativity? If there be such a basic Being, the question arises, Why should it change at all? If we analyse ourselves in

our waking state, we feel that we are the same, and that yet we are the witnesses of an endless series of changes with which we identify ourselves. And yet in deep sleep the basic Being is experienced and all sense of change is eliminated altogether. When Shri Shankara says that the One's becoming the many is due to *māyā* which is *anirvachaniya*, he looks at the tangle from the static standpoint. When Shri Ramanuja propounds his seven *anupapatti*s (logical errors) and hurls his seven arrows at the *māyā* doctrine, he looks at the tangle from the dynamic standpoint. Shankara met the Buddhist (even there only the Hinayana Buddhist) doctrine of illusion by the doctrine of *anirvachaniya*. The word *māyā* itself has different meanings. It may mean *shakti* or illusion or *Prakriti*. It may mean a mystical mixture of unity and diversity, i.e., unity in diversity and diversity in unity.

इन्द्रो मायाभिः पुरुषप ईयते । —Rigveda.

मायां तु प्रकृतिं विद्यान्मायिनं तु महेश्वरं

—Shvetāshvatara Upanishad.

What is the cause of diversity? The diversity of fruits of actions due to the diversity of *harmas* of an infinite number of individual souls (*jivas*), is the cause of the objective diversity. *Avidyā-kāma-karma* (ignorance-desire-action) is a favourite phrase of Shri Shankara. Taking this triplicity to the cosmic level we get *māyā* of *Ishvara*, *srishti-sankalpa* (creative will), and *srishti* (creation). Just as *avidyā* (individual ignorance) is *anādi* (beginningless) and *sānta* (having an end), even so *māyā* is beginningless and has an end for the *mukta* (the liberated seer). Shri Shankara says that *māyā* is a positive category (*bhāvarupa*) and is not a mere negative or illusory principle, but it can be stultified and transcended. It is hence indefinable (*anirvachaniya*) and does not belong to the category of what is (Eternal Truth like Brahman) or the category of what is not (mere illusion).

Shri Ramanuja takes it that *māyā* is a sort of taint on God, and he attacks the doctrine fiercely. But in Shri Shankara's eyes *māyā* is not a rival category. If so his doctrine of Advaita would be stultified. If the *avidyā* of each *jīva* (individual) — and they are infinite in number according to Shri Ramanuja — does not affect God who is the *antar-yāmi* of the *jivas*, is there anything surprising in the doctrine that *māyā* does not affect Brahman? If the *jīvātman* (soul) can be in a body and yet be essentially untouched by the evolutes of Prakriti, what is there surprising in Brahman's being essentially untouched by *māyā* and its macrocosmic evolutes as well as by the derivative microcosmic evolutes?

When Shri Shankara predicated a *pāram-arthika sattā* (absolute or noumenal reality) and a *vyāvahārika sattā* (relative or phenomenal reality) and distinguished them from a *pratibhāshika sattā* (illusion of reality) he gave us a master-key which could unlock the locked chests of world-interpretations. He got rid of the Buddhistic theory of nihilism, and saved the doctrine of Absolute monism from weak and erring compromises with doctrines of duality or triplicity or multiplicity. Noumenal reality and phenomenal reality are two grades of reality, each of which leads to the disappearance of the other out of the content of experience. The doctrine of *māyā* is nothing more than the affirmation in the form of a slogan or a

*mantram* of the aforesaid dichotomy of the concept of reality into noumenal reality and phenomenal reality.

Let us remember also that science has a potent voice in this matter. Science has made a powerful analysis stripping the appearances of Being and positing the essence of Being in its own way. It has reduced colours and sounds to vibrations. It has pursued its hunt of the elusive mirage of matter till the golden skin and the diamond and ruby and emerald spots on it have given place to its real and essential and inescapable being. As Balfour wittily said, 'Matter has not only been explained but explained away.' Science arrives at primordial, universal energy as the reality after analysing and explaining away and negating the appearances of things. A recent European writer says well:

We can say that science demonstrates *māyā*. It forces us out of our subjectivity, the false perspective, partial and limited, arising from the fact that we are installed in a body and in the ego. . . . Further, *māyā* does not signify the negation of the world and the wisdom which flows from it does not lead to a devaluation and disdain of it all. . . . But this movement of a return to ourselves is always very soon corrected by a movement somewhat inverse, which prevents us from seeking our profound being in our illusory self inclined to egoism. . . . If we free ourselves from the network of illusions and examine thoroughly the nature of our being, we shall find, according to the well-known Hindu doctrine, our petty ego giving place more and more to the Oversoul, to the Great All, the Ultimate Reality.

This is why Swami Vivekananda used to say again and yet again, 'But the *māyā* of the Vedanta, in its last developed form, is neither Idealism nor Realism, neither is it theory. It is a simple statement of facts of what we are and what we see all around us.' He taught also that Vedanta is neither pessimistic nor optimistic and that the true doctrine of Vedanta is that nescience (*māyā* or *avidyā*) is the cause of misery and that each soul is potentially divine (*sachchidānanda-svarupa*). He demonstrated that the view that Vedanta has no satisfactory basis of morality is absurd, and that the Vedantic theory of the unity and omnipenetrativeness of the Spirit is the only basis of all ethics. He was never tired of repeating that Vedanta is eminently and thoroughly practical. He says, 'The Vedanta also says that not only can this be realized in the depths of forests or caves but by men in all possible conditions of life.'

This is why all theoretical arguments that the doctrine of the identity of all is inconsistent with morality and altruism and love fall flat and feel pointless. *Loka-sangraha*, *prema*, *kainkarya*, and *bhakti* are seen as often in the followers of the monistic school of thought as in the followers of the dualistic schools of thought. Dr. Deussen once said in striking words: 'The *Vedanta* in its unsimplified form is the strongest support to pure morality. Indians! Keep to it.' Ordinarily the ego identifies itself with the finite body, senses, and mind. Why should its expansion be regarded as inconsistent with ethics and devotion? Altruism and love imply such psychic expansion. *Mâyâ* is the sense of separation from others. If our egoistic sense of finiteness and separateness (*avidyâ* or *mâyâ*) is negated by knowledge, the cause of altruism and love will in no sense suffer but will improve and triumph with full victory.

अथ निजः परो वैति गणाना लघुत्तेसाम् ।  
उदारचरितानां तु वस्त्रेव कुटुम्बकम् ॥

—The concepts of 'I', 'mine', or 'stranger' are the calculations of little minds. To men of broad minds the whole earth forms but one family.

This realization will come also when we regard all beings as images of God or as children of God or as *amshas* (parts) of God. But why should we suppose and assert that it will not come when we realize that they are one with God? Such a realization is not only a powerful means of denying the petty finite limited ego-centrism but also a real source of the intensive and extensive love of all beings. If every soul is Brahman, the souls in the universe cannot be really separate from one another. Thus the concepts of universal renunciation and service and love flow as readily from the concept of *mâyâ* as from any other spiritual concept in the world. The concept of spiritual fellowship is a basic concept; but the concept of spiritual identity is an even more fundamental realization.

We may consider here in brief the seeming irreconcilability of the Advaitic doctrine of *vibhutva* and the Vishishtadvaitic doctrine of *anutva* in respect of the individual souls. Here again we see the mighty potency of the primary analogies, examples, and illustrations which fascinated the great founders of the three systems of thought and which tyrannize over our minds even to this day. The *avachchheda-vâda*, the *bimba-pratibimba-*

*vâda*, the *raju-sarpa* (rope-snake), the *shuktirajata* (nacre-silver), the *sthânu-purusha* (stump-man) the *maru-mareechikâ* (mirage), the *vyâdha-râjaputra* (king's son brought up as hunter), *dashamastvamasi* (you are the tenth person) and other illustrations seem to throw light on the identity of the universal soul and the individual souls as well as their infiniteness of being consequent on such identity. The *amshinshi-vâda*, the *angângivâda*, the illustrations of *agnivisphulinga* (fire and sparks), and *deepaprabhâ* (lamp and light), etc., seem to throw light on the organic relationship of God and the world—*chit* and *achit*—and on the *vibhutva* of God (*Paramâtman*) and the *anutva* of the individual soul (*âtman*). But, after all, what is the basic difference between the infinite pervasiveness of the *âtman* (as propounded by Shri Shankara) and the infinite pervasiveness of the *dharmabhuta jnâna* of the *âtman* or individual soul (as propounded by Shri Ramanuja)? If infinite *dharmabhuta jnânas* can be infinitely pervasive, why should not there be infinite *vibhu âtmans* with *akhandâkârâ vritti* till the identity of the *jivâtman* and *Paramâtman* is intuited and realized?

If we probe with some care and detachment the ultimate ideas about beatitude, we can arrive at the same conclusion. Once we are agreed that pure *ânanda* is the birth-right and goal of the soul, there is no possibility of measuring the bliss of beatitude with any known organon or intellectual yard-stick available to us now. I have somehow a feeling that the doctrine of graded bliss as propounded by Shri Madhva—like his doctrine of the classification of souls into *mukti-yogyas*, *nitya-samsâris*, and *tama-yogyas* is not of the essence of the dualistic system of thought. But whatever that may be, that system also predicates pure *ânanda* untouched by pain, as the nature and goal of the *âtman*. Why should we not realize and affirm that there could be diverse types of beatitude just as there are diverse types of *sâdhanâs*? The fact that *sâlokya*, *sâmcepyâ*, *sârupya*, *sârshti*, and *sâyujya* constitute one type of beatitude, cannot and need not negate the *kaivalya* type of beatitude, where the soul, freed from all tints of ignorance, attains absolute identity with Brahman—निरजनः परमं सान्वद्युपौति । The orthodox Vishishtadvaita school calls *kaivalya* a low

type of beatitude, being the realization of the nature of the *jīvātman* or *ātman*, while real beatitude is the realization of the nature of *Paramātman*. The orthodox Advaita school calls *salokya*, etc., as a lower type of bliss compared with the *kaivalya* or *bhoomā* type of bliss. To me it appears that the supreme, eternal, infinite bliss of communion with God and realizing His government of the universe (without conducting it) is as high and satisfying as the bliss of *kaivalya*. Let us not try to establish ranks and pedigrees and hierarchies in the realm of supreme, eternal, infinite Bliss:

Thus the seeming irreconcilability of the affirmations and attacks in respect of the *māyā* doctrine turns out to be less formidable than it might appear to be at the first sight. The apparent irreconcilability of the *nirguna* and *saguna* affirmations about Brahman is in the same boat in reality. When the *Taittiriya Upanishad* says 'सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म', it is the starting point for both Shri Shankara and Shri Ramanuja. If we regard the macrocosm in relation to its causeless cause of Brahman, we describe Brahman as *Ishvara*, just as a man becomes a husband and a father after marriage and parentage but is only a man before then. Husbandhood and parenthood do not supersede manhood but coexist with it and are only modes or manifestations of it. There is no compulsory causal relation between God and the universe. There is no *tertium quid* bringing them into relation or negating such relation. According to Shri Shankara, it is Brahman's *ikshana* that projects the universe on its evolution. According to Shri Ramanuja, it is *Ishvara's* *sankalpa* that causes creation. If we ask, Why should there be such *sankalpa*, we get such replies as *ichchhā*, *dayā*, *leelā*, etc. The same replies will explain the relation of *Saguna* Brahman and the creation and preservation and destruction of the universe. When viewed in relation to the universe Shri Shankara calls Him *Saguna* Brahman or *Ishvara*. But there is no external constraint in such a relation. Viewed apart from such relation, Shri Shankara calls Him *Nirguna* Brahman or simply Brahman.

Just as we transcend all objectivity and multiplicity in deep sleep and intuit only the seer without the complications of the seen, even so in *asamprajnāta* or *nirbeeja* or *nirvikalpa samādhi* we can intuit, according

to Shri Shankara, Brahman in esse.

In the same manner we can realize the point of reconciliation of the *vivarta-vāda* and the *parināma-vāda*. The former stresses the merely *apparent* character of the change and takes its stand on Being. It makes becoming a mere ripple on the ocean of Being. The ripple is due to the breeze of creativeness due to the *unādi karma* of the souls. If the *karma* is negated, the ripple lapses into the ocean, but the breeze will be blowing elsewhere and countless ripples will be the inevitable consequence. सामुद्रे इति तरंगः - to use Shri Shankara's illuminating phrase which has another application as well, viz. that the individual selves belong to God and not *vice versa*. The phrase occurs in Shri Shankara's famous poem *Āchārya-shatpadi* in which he supplicates God Vishnu and prays for God Vishnu's grace. Even in Shri Ramanuja's doctrine, we may ask how God undergoes change from the *sukshma* (subtle) state to the *sthula* (gross) state without undergoing any change of essence. Hence it is not a total *parināma* but what the Shākta doctrine calls *avikāri-parināma* (transformation without change of essence). If change of essence is not inevitable in passing from the *sukshma* (subtle) to the *sthula* (gross) state, need we be surprised by such an affirmation in the passage from the real state of oneness to an apparent state of manifoldness?

The fact is that Shri Shankara emphasized the concept of *ānanda* which Buddhism of the narrow Hinayana type either omitted or negated by the *shunya* concept, while Shri Ramanuja and Shri Madhva emphasized the concepts of love and grace which are externalizations of *ānanda*. Shri Shankara says, 'अस्मद्दोयाश्च केऽच्चत्', and thus shows his inclusiveness in respect of the other schools of thought (*darshanas*) and especially the Vishishtādvaitins. Vedanta Deshika calls the Dvaita school of Shri Madhva as near to his system मरसचिकृष्टं मतं. Thus the three schools can draw together and coalesce into a trinity in unity and a unity in trinity which are but an aspect of unity in diversity and diversity in unity.

Advaita and Vishishtādvaita and Dvaita are after all but branches of the Vedanta tree. The Brahman concept is the basis of all—'ब्रह्म गुरुर्ग्रतिष्ठ'. Whether we regard Brahman as the infinite, eternal, nameless,

formless Absolute, or nameless and formless *sachchidānanda* (*Ishvara*), or God Vishnu or God Shiva or Goddess Shakti or Rāma or Krishna, we are but talking in diverse ways about one and the same Being. In some mysterious way we feel that we are infinite amidst the seeming flow of finite things and that we are in a vital and intimate relation (be it identity or equality or inequality) to infinite *sachchidānanda*. According to our diverse endowments we may prefer and exalt action or meditation or devotion or knowledge. But our common faith is that all is Divine and that we are pure Spirit and that bliss is our birthright. This is the Vedantic Sun of which all the systems of thought in India or beyond India are but diverse rays. The ultimate synthesis is best expressed in the famous verse:

देहबुद्ध्या तु दासोऽहं जीवबुद्ध्या त्वत्त्वकः ।  
आत्मबुद्ध्या त्वमेवाहमिति मे निश्चिता मतिः ॥

The same idea is expressed in the forty-first verse in the sixth *sarga* of Vidyaranya's *Shankaravijaya*:

दासत्तेऽहं देहबुद्ध्यात्मिं शंभो  
जातस्तेऽशो जीवबुद्ध्या त्रिष्ण्डे ।  
सर्वबुद्ध्यात्मन्यात्मबुद्ध्या त्वमेव  
त्येवं मे धीर्निश्चिता सर्वशास्त्रः ॥

There is a great deal of controversy as regards the *avirodha* concept as adumbrated in the Advaitic system. It may be looked at from diverse points of view. One view is that if we eliminate the un-Vedic tenets in each rival system, we will have a coherent body of synthesized doctrine. But this means the starting of a controversy as to whether a tenet is Vedic or un-Vedic. Another view is that the rival dualistic systems are at war with one another and might be left to fight it out with one another, there being no need for fight between them and Advaita:

स्वसिद्धान्तब्यवस्थाषु द्वैतिनो निश्चिता हृष्म् ।  
परस्परं विरुद्ध्यन्ते सर्वयन् न विरुद्ध्यते ॥

—*Mandukya Karika*, III, 13.

But in fact they carry on mutual warfare and also fight against Advaita. The two verses quoted above give us a concept of organic inter-relatedness which negates mutually destructive strife. In the Gita Shri Krishna says:

ज्ञानयज्ञ न चाप्यन्ये यजन्तो मासुपासते ।  
एकत्वेन पृथक्त्वेन बहुधा विश्वतो मुखं ॥

I feel and believe that the synthesis of monism, qualified monism, and dualism must be sought in this wonderful verse in the Bhagavad-gita.

## THE CONSCIOUS, THE SUB-CONSCIOUS, THE UNCONSCIOUS, AND THE SUPER-CONSCIOUS IN PSYCHOLOGY

BY PROF. P. S. NAIDU, M.A.

Until the great leader of psychoanalysis came on the stage of psychology, the students of our science were familiar only with the conscious and sub-conscious levels of the human mind, and even then their knowledge of the sub-conscious was amazingly defective. So consciousness reigned supreme, and psychology, as we are aware, was defined as the science of consciousness. This was a strictly useless type of introspective psychology which proved barren and incompetent in the face of the great problems presented by sociology. The knowledge of the sub-conscious which these conscious psychologists

possessed was confined to the realm of habits, mental and physical, which were sometimes pushed to the neural level, and sometimes presented as puzzles to the pathologist. The Jamesian discussion of the unconscious (it is really the sub-conscious misnamed the unconscious) in the eighth chapter of his *Principles* is typical of the confusion that reigned in psychology. The advent of Freud has cleared the mist that enveloped psychological thinking, and has revealed the conscious, the sub-conscious and the unconscious in their proper perspective. Anoegenic psychology has rendered great

service to the students of human nature by dispelling many of the illusions that beset the path of the psychologist. The greatest service that it has rendered is, of course, the light that it has thrown on the nature of the conscious, the sub-conscious, and the unconscious; and to the study of the relation of these three aspects of the human mind we shall now turn our attention.

We may, subject to the limitations imposed on us by a terminology coined out of a language which is spatial in essence, speak of the three layers of the human mind—the conscious, sub-conscious, and unconscious layers. These are ranged in the order mentioned. The conscious level of the mind comprises all those thoughts, feelings, and springs of action of which we are aware. When we are conscious, we think and feel and act; and we are also aware that we so think, feel, and act. The superficial analysis of consciousness attempted by James in his study of 'the stream of thought' may be tentatively taken as valid for our purposes. But what we are aware of at any moment is but a small part of our mental equipment. While discussing a psychological topic, we are not explicitly aware of our knowledge of other subjects, philosophical and non-philosophical, that we have gained. The systems of ideas and principles that we have organized or built up in these subjects is not consciously present in our mind. But it is there somewhere ready to come up to consciousness if needed. And the whole system of physical skills or bodily habits, is also there, springing up into dynamic activity at a moment's notice if wanted, but lying quiet when not called upon to serve. All these may be viewed as lodged in the sub-conscious level of the mind. The sub-conscious is thus the repository of all these mental and physical skills which we have taken great pains to acquire, and which now have become part of the habitual equipment of our nature. It is to be noted that the contents of the sub-conscious had their birth or origin in the conscious level of the mind to start with, and then only sank down to the lower level.

How are we to conceive of the unconscious? Freud's contention is that the conscious and the sub-conscious account for one-ninth of the mind, using a figure borrowed from the appearance of the floating iceberg. Eight-ninths is unconscious. And this unconscious

is dynamic, exercising its influence on the conscious, and controlling apparently our conscious behaviour. Now, the unconscious has been called many unkind names. It has been contended with great show of reason that it is a contradiction in terms. These arguments are based on a wilful misinterpretation of the Freudian connotation of the unconscious. It is too late in the day to pretend to naivete in the interpretation of the unconscious. We know that Freud has established beyond any shadow of doubt that the unconscious is the store-house of all those unsocial, ugly, repressed desires which cannot be satisfied, and which generated unresolvable conflicts, and finally had to go down to the hidden depths of the mind. They do not lie quiet there, but gathering momentum disturb the conscious level of the mind not only in sleep and dreams, but also in waking life, leading in extreme cases to insane behaviour of a puzzling type. Now, the point is this: no one of us is free from the unconscious. There is only one type of person who is free, and he is the Jivanmukta. But then for him the phenomenal world has ceased to count. So, the three levels of the mind as outlined above are present in all of us.

For the first time in the history of psychology the study of the three levels of the mind was undertaken by McDougall and Freud, the former giving his attention to the first two levels and the latter to the third and in many senses the most important level. No one before them had the vision which inspired these two great leaders to undertake a searching analysis of mental structure and function. Mental dynamics as a branch of psychology owes its origin, development and its very existence to McDougall and Freud. For the present I shall confine myself to that aspect of purposivistic psychology which has a bearing on the four levels of mind mentioned in the title of the paper. McDougall it was who analysed the dynamic structure of the mind into instincts and emotions. He has shown us how these instincts and emotions are organized into sentiments, concrete and abstract, and how these are finally organized after passing through conflicts and crises into scales of values. The value-scales which may vary at different times display a hierarchical arrangement of sentiments which are the outgrowth of individual experience. The primitive instincts and emotions are not only

innate and inherited, but they are racial in operation. There is a certain uniformity in regard to their cognitive, affective and conative aspects and consequently they are stereotyped. The sentiments on the other hand are individual, acquired and variable in origin and manifestation.

Now the bearing of this McDougallian analysis on the different levels of mind which we are considering is this: the primitive instincts and their concomitant emotions, like the reflexes belong to the very constitution of our nature, and most of the time they lie and operate below the threshold of consciousness. It is not to be denied, however, that they do under certain conditions rise to the conscious level, and make themselves felt most obtrusively. But a good part of the mechanism of instinct functions sub-consciously. This is as it should be in the interests of the general economy of life. The purely vegetative or biological functions of life must be taken care of by the levels of mind below consciousness. But man does not live by bread alone. He lives by ideals and values. And the level of mind which deals with the values of life is the McDougallian hormic level of sentiments and sentiment-scales. Desire, hope, ambition, conflict, decision, and will have their scenes of activity at this level. The formation of individual character and the development of group culture which McDougallian psychology has analysed with success, involve conscious effort, volition, and decision. And on goes man building sentiments and sentiment-scales, facing crises, resolving them, and conquering fresh fields of character. And all these take place at the conscious level. Now McDougall has pointed out that in this vast mental architecture the master-sentiment of self-regard plays the most important part. This self-regard is to be understood in the strictly worldly sense. If it is to control all that is highest and best in man, then it will be found that the sentiments and sentiment-scales that we take great pains to form, will, like the very complicated habits which we take infinite pains to acquire, sink into the sub-conscious and become mechanical in their action. And some of them may become very wicked and unsocial and then they will go down to the unconscious levels. Freud has explained to us how this happens. In fact the Freudian complex is nothing but the

McDougallian sentiment that has become morbid, unsocial, and reprehensible. So, if the psychological process so beautifully analysed and explained by McDougall and Freud is under the control of the economic and unspiritualistic ethical tenets of the West, then that which is conscious will be constantly degenerating into the unconscious. The phenomenon of regression, discussed both by Freud and McDougall, is one instance of the degeneration of mental structure. Under the guidance of the 'ideals' which are of the earth the consciously organized mental patterns of man will either sink to the subconscious and become mechanical in their operation, or go down to the unconscious and become abnormal at their very source. Is there no way of lifting the sentiments and sentiment-scales to higher levels? There is, and it is here that the super-conscious comes to our aid.

McDougall has shown how through great individual effort the primitive, brutal instincts and emotions are steadily raised to higher levels. The master-sentiment is the great dynamic impelling force in this process of upliftment of the mind. If a proper master-sentiment is chosen then the process of development will not be reversed. What then should be the master-sentiment for raising the human mind to the highest conceivable level?

Suggestions for a proper answer to the question have been forthcoming from those psychologists who have attempted to extend McDougall's hormic theory. They are Drs. Garnett and Lundholm. The former has drawn our attention to the failure on the part of McDougall to explain the great force of the moral and religious sentiments in our mind. He has pointed out the necessity for postulating some other sources of urge to activity besides the instinctive. The instinctive end is never ultimate, but always a means to a further end. Every instinctive urge has a point of satiety while man's nature is such that he must for ever pursue something which satisfies but does not satiate. What then is this that is present in man's mind and yet does not belong to the instinctive level? It is the desire of the spirit; and this desire manifests itself in the form of three spiritual instincts for *truth, beauty, and goodness*. As Clutton-Brock says in his *Ultimate Self*, 'Spirit is a name given by philosophy to that

part of us which has certain desires that are not of the flesh, and can only be satisfied by different means. . . . The philosophy of the spirit tells us that the spirit desires three things, and desires these for their own sake and not for any further aim beyond them. . . . These three desires, and these alone are the desires of the spirit, and they differ from all other desires in that they are to be pursued for their own sake. If they are pursued for some ulterior end, they change their nature.'

'So the spirit has three activities, and three alone as it has three desires, namely the moral, the intellectual, and the aesthetic activities. And man lives so that he may exercise these three activities of the spirit and for no other reason.'

If we incorporate these ideas into the McDougallian scheme, then we find that Truth, Beauty, and Goodness should replace self-regard, and should function as master-sentiments at the highest levels of sentiment organization. But how is this to be done? And, moreover these three ideals have been pursued by the West, and yet as the carnage at the battle front demonstrates to us, they have not succeeded in preventing the mind from degeneration to the sub-conscious and unconscious levels. There are certain Western psychological theories of art and morality which take great delight in tracing these ideals to the repressed conflicts in the unconscious levels of the mind. Art and morality are looked upon as manifestations of the Freudian unconscious. So, Dr. Garnett's suggestion does not carry us far. Let us now turn to Dr. Lundholm.

Dr. Lundholm strikes the right note when he speaks of Meta-psychology in the opening paragraphs of his book, 'Conation and our conscious life'. According to this author the basic property of mind is not merely the urge to live but also to evolve into higher forms of mental life. 'May it not be,' he asks, 'that just as the organism by its physical property is a constituent in an infinite physical continuum, by its mental property it is a constituent in an infinite mental or psychic continuum, and further may it not be that, just as changes in the extrinsic part of the physical continuum can reflect themselves into the body of the organism, changes in the extrinsic part of the mental continuum might reflect themselves into the mind of the

organism?' Again at the conclusion of his discussion of the nature of the memory continuum our author asks, 'Is there an unknown master mind which swayed by some supreme urge in one visionary synthesis, embraces this ocean of experience which causes to respond through a powerful expenditure of energy every part of this boundless structure? Who shall tell?'

These authors are blindly groping after the higher levels of mental evolution. Because of the oppressive traditions of the West they are not able to see the existence of the super-conscious levels of mind. Now the McDougallian scheme of evolution of sentiments when supplemented by that of Dr. Garnett reaches the highest conceivable point in the conscious stratum. Thereafter the thread has to be picked by Hindu philosophy and psychology. The evolution of mental structure should now proceed on a higher and different plane. It should be controlled in such a way that regression to the lower levels may be effectively prevented from occurring. Sentiments of such a type should be formed as will lead to the assimilation of the instincts and emotions. All these are possible through the conscious and purposeful direction of mental evolution in the super-conscious levels. And the steps for such direction are laid down in our Yogic discipline.

If there are levels below consciousness, then it goes without saying that there are levels above consciousness too. And if psychology has succeeded in unearthing the facts and principles governing the structure and function of the mind at the lower levels, then it is competent to deal with the super-conscious levels too. And such a psychology was known to our ancients.

Starting from the point where McDougallian psychology abandons the evolution of the human mind, we can show that by making Parabrahma-regarding sentiment as the master sentiment the mind can rise to the higher levels till it reaches the highest possible point in evolution. The methods of concentration and meditation and the goal of renunciation and detachment laid down in our holy scriptures show clearly the stages through which the aspirant should consciously guide his mind. The Yoga system describes the several successive stages through which the mind has to pass before it reaches the final goal. The experiences, psychical

and mental, of the seeker after the highest truth are also described. But when the super-conscious stage is reached it should not be taken for granted that there will be no fall. The power of the lower levels, parti-

cularly of the unconscious is very great. So, he who is moving in the super-conscious levels must keep on till the highest stage of God-realization is attained. Then there is no fall.

## WINNING THE PEACE

BY SWAMI LOKESWARANANDA

It is said the Allies are fighting not only to win the war but to win the peace too. A noble idea. But will they succeed? The war of course they are going to win. That is as good as certain now. But the peace it is doubtful if they are going to win.

For one thing, they have no plans—at least none that is avowedly meant for winning the peace. That is rather strange in these days when the value of planning is recognized and when everything is planned accordingly.

Of course, there is the Atlantic Charter.\* There is also the declaration of Four Freedoms. They are very good documents as far as they go. They envisage a new world-order based on equity and justice. And that, indirectly, makes for winning the peace. But many, in the East as well as the West, are frankly suspicious as to the *bona-fides* of these documents. They think they mean nothing. They are a mere eye-wash. Mr. Churchill's declaration, 'We mean to hold our own' is a proof that the suspicion is not altogether groundless.

Then the Atlantic Charter has one limitation. It may not apply to India. That is, the proposed world-order is likely to exclude one-fifth of the world's total population. Obviously it will be a sham. It cannot succeed.

There is one clear danger for this lack of planning. When the war will end, we shall not know what to do. Inevitably we shall get into a mess. Perhaps we shall commit the blunder of a Versailles or something worse even. That means, we will be sowing the seeds of another war. The very thought is dreadful.

The thing is, we are too intent on winning the war. That fills all our attention. That is of course good, but that is not enough. Winning the war is not the end. It is only halfway to the end. And it is comparatively easy, too; easy, because familiar. We know the way that leads to victory. But the way to the peace is altogether unknown to us. It involves treading over a new ground. For peace itself is a new concept to us.

The outlook for peace is indeed gloomy. All genuine lovers of peace should feel concerned at this. They cannot just look on. Peace is not an affair of the politicians only. It is doubtful if it is their affair at all. They are all right for the war, but not for peace. If things are left to them, they will surely bungle. Let men of the highest vision step in; men who can think of the world as one, who are free from the complexities of race and creed; men who are conscious of the real purpose of life and are anxious for its fulfilment. Let them get together and hammer out a plan calculated to establish and secure a lasting peace.

The first thing to determine is what sort of peace is the right sort. Then it has to be decided, how, once established, it may be secured.

With these there are other questions inextricably bound up, the question of India, for instance. Will she continue to be ruled by the British or will she have her own Government? Similarly there are other countries in the East. There are countries in Europe, too, like Poland, Austria, or Czechoslovakia. The fates of these countries must be settled. To make the peace safe, they must be given a fair deal. In the Peace Conference that will follow after the war they must be adequately represented and their just claims considered and met.

\* From recent press-reports it appears this too is a myth.

But it is difficult to believe this will be done. Very likely their voices will be stifled. For the mentality to bully and to boss is too strong among the Big Powers. And they still think in terms of imperialism, colonial expansion, mandatory system, and so on. It is quite conceivable they will begin to scramble among themselves for more power, more territories, more trade facilities—all these of course at the expense of the small powers. It will be a miracle if they do not.

Then, will all the powers co-operate in building up the new world-order? It is difficult to say. There is too much jealousy and distrust going round now. There are also ideological differences. Very likely, some of the powers will prefer to keep away. They have to be coaxed into joining the enterprise. It is rather odd: war can make the most absurd combinations possible. Even communism can join hands with capitalism. This is possible because of the lust for victory. A similar lust for peace has to be created. All must realize no sacrifice is too much for peace. And for its sake all must co-operate, all hands must join. They must realize also that isolationism does not pay. The world has become one today. Countries have their destinies peculiarly intertwined. Problems of one country are very soon problems of other countries too. Peace, freedom, and progress—these are indivisible today.

Here an important question arises, What about the Axis countries? Will they be asked to co-operate or left alone and treated like 'pariahs'? Perhaps they deserve to be so treated for all they have done. But if there is to be a lasting peace, this must not be done. Instead, they must be treated like erring brothers. Anger must not overrule generosity and forgiveness.

One difficulty can be foreseen in this connection: leaders may be willing to forgive or to be generous to the Axis countries, but not so the people. Almost surely they will demand reprisals. This happened after the last war too. Leaders will find quite a job of work trying to get them to change this attitude.

When peace has been got, the next step to take is to devise means by which it may be permanently secured. This is a task for experts. Perhaps they will suggest a world-federation or some such thing. Whatever it is they suggest, it is certain it

cannot be perfect all at once. It will have many defects, to begin with. Still all must agree to work it. If they work it, then, perhaps, in course of time and when sufficient experiences have been gathered, something good, something that will guarantee against any breach of the peace, will emerge.

One thing is certain: the organization may be the best that human ingenuity can devise, still it cannot eliminate clashes and conflicts altogether. These will be there at any rate. But given mutual goodwill and trust and a love of peace, these need not lead to war. So the essential thing is to cultivate mutual goodwill, mutual trust and a love of peace. In the present atmosphere these things are lacking; nay, discouraged and discredited even. This state of things must be reversed. Otherwise the world federation will not succeed.

Side by side with this, we must recognize that war is an unmitigated evil, a terrible folly, a criminal waste. It involves us in an orgy of passions that debases us, turns us into brutes, and has, on the whole, a very retrograde effect on our civilization. There is a ridiculous hypocrisy in our attitude towards war. If two individuals fight in the street, we are shocked. We say, 'It is savage.' In this war many such pairs of individuals are fighting and getting killed. We think it is all right. We approve it, we even egg them on. This hypocrisy we must get rid of by all means.

Even then our task is not finished. There is a lot more to do. The problem of peace is not merely a problem of perfecting our economic or political systems or adjusting our international relations. Fundamentally, it is a spiritual problem. The root of the war is in our outlook, in our false sense of values. These we have to change. Greed is our creed now. To grab—to grab more and more of everything—that is the attitude of our individual as well as collective mind. The tragedy of this age is our ignominious surrender to materialism. Things of the spirit do not appeal to us. Higher purposes of life we have lost sight of. We do not see the justification for honest life, for good life. We have knowledge, we have power. These we use for the abject purpose of increasing our sense-pleasures. Our whole endeavour is directed to that end, in fact. It is a very serious situation. It is the

greatest crisis humanity has ever faced.

But what is the way out? The way out is to seek God within our hearts—God, the Immanent. He is the source of all that is good. Charity, piety, tolerance—all these come from Him. He will give us all the noble impulses which we lack today or which are too feeble in us. Let us try to be conscious of His will and His presence through the universe. Let us try to understand what He wants of us and let us try to be loyal to Him in all we do. Let us get near Him more and more and let us finally merge

ourselves in Him altogether. That is our real fulfilment and that is our life's real purpose. To that end we must dedicate ourselves, individually as well as collectively. A resurgence of religion—that is the need of the hour. By that we will become better individuals, and the world, a better place. And both these are necessary conditions for the safety of the peace. So let us concentrate on religion more and more, and then, the task of winning the peace and securing it will be easy.

## SIIRI RAMAKRISHNA'S CONCEPTION OF SPIRITUAL MINISTRATION

BY A VEDANTIST

Speaking about Gurus, Shri Ramakrishna once said,

Anyone and everyone cannot be a Guru. A huge timber floats on the water and can carry animals as well. But a piece of worthless wood sinks if a man sits on it, and drowns him. Therefore in every age God incarnates Himself as the Guru to teach humanity. Satchidānanda alone is the Guru (*Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, American Edition, p. 98).

This is the highest conception of a Guru that a Hindu can have. The point to note here is that the mere assumption of leadership is no guarantee that one is really capable of this. There must be an intrinsic worth, which is nothing less than Divinity.

If a man in the form of a Guru awakens spiritual consciousness in you, then know for certain that it is God the Absolute who has assumed that human form for *your* sake (*ibid.*, p. 217, italics ours).

It is granted, however, by the Hindus that there may be degrees of manifestation of Divinity in the Gurus, which fact raises a peculiar problem. Through love, veneration, and spiritual conviction a disciple may be led to think that his Guru is possessed of the highest realization. No Hindu will dispute that so long as it is held as a personal belief. But if this is openly preached, the Hindu society has its safeguard in the form of the objective tests set forth in the scriptures, to which all Gurus must submit. These tests may be social, moral or spiritual.

Besides, good leadership is dependent on the general level of culture, intelligence, morality, and spirituality. Given these, there can be little fear of bad guidance. But when these are wanting, any designing hoax or group of fools, be that in the spiritual or other fields, can impose on society. In a cultured society empty preaching evokes little response and has no lasting result:

It is extremely difficult to teach others. A man can teach only if God reveals Himself to him and gives command. . . . Unless you have a command from God, who will listen to your words? Don't you know how easily the people of Calcutta get excited? . . . The people of Calcutta love sensations. . . . But it won't do if a man only imagines that he has God's command. God reveals Himself to man and speaks. Only then may one receive His command. How forceful are the words of such a teacher! He can move mountains. But mere lectures? People will listen to them for a few days and then forget them. They will never act upon mere words (*ibid.*, p. 141-42).

Those who are not commissioned by God become vain and lead others like the blind leading the blind. For such irresponsible and empty leadership both parties are to blame—the leaders as well as the led. If there is a hankering for 'sensations', sensations will be dealt out by the thousand. The recipients must be fully qualified for the gifts they expect; otherwise these will be of no use. To ensure, therefore, that society is properly led we have to improve the social *milieu*:

One can get human Gurus by the million. All want to be teachers. But who cares to be a disciple? (*ibid.*, p. 141).

While admitting the cogency of unilateral help from a Guru and the possibility of salvation through grace in rare cases, Shri Ramakrishna never encouraged sloth and slackening of personal effort. For according to him

you must practise spiritual discipline a little. It will not do simply to say that milk contains butter. You must let the milk set into curd and then churn it. Only then can you get butter from it. . . . one cannot achieve anything through laziness and procrastination (*ibid.*, p. 241).

Shri Ramakrishna held that spiritual leadership descends on a man from above, and in its unadulterated form there is nothing of selfishness or ego in such a man. He himself could never tolerate being called a Guru, for in his view God alone is the only true Guru.

If somebody addresses me as Guru, I say to him: 'Go away, you fool! How can I be a teacher? There is no teacher except Satchidānanda' (*ibid.*, p. 638).

There might have been fake ones who

made a profession of this institution, and for whom he had little regard:

People with a little occult power gain such things as name and fame. Many of them want to follow the profession of Guru, gain people's recognition, and make disciples and devotees. Men say of such a Guru, 'Ah! He is having a wonderful time.' . . . People give them presents. . . . The profession of a teacher is like that of a prostitute. It is the selling of oneself for the trifles of money, honour, and creature comforts (*ibid.*, p. 745). It is not good to be a Guru by profession. One cannot be a teacher without a command from God. He who says he is a Guru is a man of mean intelligence. . . . He who is spiritually higher than others does not consider himself a Guru (*ibid.*, p. 794).

People flock round a true Guru unasked like bees gathering round a fragrant, full-blown flower. 'Does the magnet say to the iron, "come near me"? That is not necessary. Because of the attraction of the magnet, the iron rushes to it' (p. 466). Egotism never manifests itself in his life, for he is ever conscious that not he but God is the real doer.

As for warring sects, Shri Ramakrishna used to say that as sedge grows in stagnant pools, so sects grow where the spiritual current has stopped flowing.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

The *Conversations* in this issue will open up the dormant fountains of faith in the reader. Swami Gambhirananda finishes in this issue his learned and instructive article based on research in the Upanishads. *Americans Look to India* hits the nails on the head, and shows what Indians have got to give to the spiritually hungry West. Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri has made out a thoroughly convincing case for stopping the intellectual quarrels among Dvaitists. Prof. Naidu's article breaks new ground and he has shown wherein Eastern Psychology supplements as well as supersedes what the West has so far achieved in this field. *Winning the Peace* shows a way out of the seemingly impossible squabbles to which men and nations are ordinarily heir to. Within a brief compass a vedantist has brought out nicely Shri Ramakrishna's con-

ception of a true Guru. It opens our eyes to the equipments spiritual leadership requires to be effective.

### IDEALS OF INDIAN EDUCATION

A harmonious blending of the ancient and modern cultures in planning out the right type of education in India was advocated by Sadhu T. L. Vaswani at a meeting at Calcutta. He wanted that Indian students should be given the opportunity to imbibe the ethical and spiritual ideals of the Hindu *Rishis*, and, at the same time, assimilate the scientific and technical knowledge of the modern West. He regretted that the education that was being imparted at present was not a unifying force, but often served to create an unnatural distinction between the educated and the illiterate. Regarding the ideals which should be kept in view in planning out the country's education, the speaker said that the following three principles

should be inculcated, viz, reverence for the teacher, reverence for the physical body which was the vehicle of the spirit, and reverence for the poor. Emphasizing the need for inspiring the educated youth with the ideals of service and sacrifice, he observed,

Filled with a spirit of service and sacrifice, go forth as selfless soldiers of the motherland, and who so fights and who so falls in the service of the lowly and the lost,—he is blessed ; for truth and justice in him triumph for ever more.

Universities in our country have more or less become merely examining bodies. Students pass out by the hundreds, and some of them come out in brilliant form. But in the majority of them true originality is lacking, and capacity for leadership absent. The idea of sacrifice for the common weal is hardly developed. Wrong ideals and the foreign outlook engender, in the educated, snobbery and a false sense of prestige which alienate them from the masses. It is gratifying to note that educationists in this country are trying to reorganize the present system of education on right lines suited to the needs of the country. Sardar K. M. Panikkar, President of the All-India Educational Conference, said :

We cannot, in the new world to come, be satisfied with an education which separates the educated from the general masses of people and makes them feel different from the rest. It is the raising of the standard of the average that our national education must aim at, providing at the same time, for leadership in every sphere of life. . . . Any well-organized system of national education must allow for a wide variety of educational institutions: experimental schools, work schools, *Garukuls*, *Ashrams*, and any other kind that educational thinkers can devise. It is only in these institutions that new ideas can be developed, new methods tried, and new systems fashioned. Special schools and institutions which strike out original paths in both methodology and organization not only deserve toleration, but every encouragement. They alone can provide the antidote to departmentalism, the control of education by routine and administration, and put a brake on the inevitable tendency towards regimentation.

The necessity for placing the control and direction of our educational institutions in the hands of selfless and staunch educationists need hardly be emphasized. Those who are for State control of education or regimentation cannot feel encouraged when they find what such education has made of young men and women in some Western countries. The present war is an example of what

wrong education can do. The ideals of education should be free from the unhealthy influence of political doctrines or racial bias. They should help the growth of essential human values on a spiritual basis.

### THE HISTORIAN'S TASK

A fervent appeal to all Indians, irrespective of their caste, race, or politics, to unite in a common effort to reconstruct the glorious past on which depend the present and the future of the country was made by Dr. S. N. Sen, delivering the presidential address of the Indian History Congress. He deprecated the attempts of interested politicians to distort historical evidence to suit their needs. A historian is a faithful recorder of truth, and should not be influenced by racial or political prejudices.

History and politics belong to entirely different planes, but honourable co-operation between politicians and historians is not impossible or unpracticable without a subservient alliance, for they both profess to have a common end in view, the service of the motherland.

But unfortunately the position in India is different. Indian history, written by foreigners, is often neither dispassionate nor impartial. Non-Indian writers of Indian history cannot be said to have been inspired by a sincere spirit of service to the motherland. It cannot be denied that India has had to suffer due to wrong history being used as convenient political propaganda. Hence Dr. Sen has rightly sounded a note of warning that

to try to harness history to the chariot-wheels of politics is a senseless sacrilege, for history written to order is propagandist literature, and subjective studies must necessarily be one-sided.

And he has drawn the pointed attention of the historian to the fact that the task of history is to discover truth, however inconvenient it may be to individuals or groups.

Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar stressed the importance of the role of the historian in depicting the history of nations with as much care and accuracy as possible, and, at the same time, keeping himself above petty passions and prejudices. He observed,

History, which is but a story of true life of generations past, would still lose none of its essential virtues if the historian were to be a little more considerate and a little less critical of the supposed faults of individuals and of nations, trying to see the good in things, as much as

possible, if not more, than the evil of historical events, and so to depict history that while it encouraged a spirit of respect and reverence towards one's own land and to one's own history, it did not provoke those tendentious inclinations and repercussions which eventually led to the cult of hatred and to the spirit of antagonism to this or that particular nation or group.

There are many instances in which a false or incorrect interpretation of history has roused the passions of not merely individuals but whole nations, thus leading to terrible tragedies. Some think there is no harm in telling an untruth or half-truth if it is apparently beneficial to a class or community of people because, to them, the end justifies the means. In the modern State, politicians dominate every branch of life activity, and indirectly put pressure on the scientist, the historian, and the economist who may not see eye to eye with them. But if the historian is to give his best, no impediments should be imposed on him from outside, and he must be left at liberty to pursue his studies in an atmosphere of freedom.

Historical research has an important place in the collective life of a nation. Nations, like individuals, can profit by the accumulated experiences of the past. And one has to turn to the pages of history for the past experiences of the human race, its achievements and failures. Thus a great responsibility rests on the historian whose task is none too easy. He has to get at the truth, and not be guided by wrong ideas or superstitions. Those who address themselves to the task of compiling the history of a country other than their own, will have to guard against forming views and opinions from ignorance or mere superficial knowledge of indigenous conditions. The tendency to twist historical data, from any consideration whatsoever, has to be discouraged. Until recently Indians have had to rely on the writings of Western scholars. It is a matter for the Indian Universities and such other educational and cultural bodies to offer greater facilities for historical research. We are glad to note that the History Congress has already taken up the arduous task of compiling a true and scientific History of India.

#### FREEDOM—ESSENTIAL CONDITION OF PERMANENT PEACE

As the United Nations approach the beginning of the end of the War, their leaders

are called upon to give serious thought to the ways and means of ensuring a stable peace in the post-war world. The statesmen at the helm of affairs, at the termination of the last War had hoped to achieve permanent world peace by making sure that there would be no future wars. But they have been sadly disappointed. And the trend of the declarations made, from time to time, by men in power today is far from encouraging. The prospect of victory is not able to hold out an equally cheerful prospect of freedom to those who deserve it. Writing in the *Indian Review* for December 1944, Sir R. P. Masani says:

When, therefore, the threat to life and property is removed and the hour of peace or victory draws near, the lower instincts of man reassert themselves. Masses as well as classes are swept off their feet by a narrow national outlook, dominated by selfish interest, despite all previous resolutions and declarations in favour of reorganizing and revitalizing their life on the basis of equality and reciprocity.

If one country keeps another in bondage, it will naturally excite the jealousy of a third, thus making wars inevitable, as world events are already proving today. Freedom is the essential condition of corporate life. A brotherhood of free nations, big and small, with right of individuals to freedom of thought and speech, can work successfully for peace and security. Expressing his fears regarding the outcome of victory, he observes :

During the gloom of the early days of Axis aggression, there were declarations of human equality and unity, declarations promising freedom and security to all nations, great or small. But as the prospect of victory was seen rising over the horizon, we noticed a tendency to drift back to the old discredited notions of imperialism and exploitation.

But statesmen are human, and may lose sight of the principles and ideals which they profess to maintain and uphold. But 'they shall not' do so, thinks Sir Masani,

if a world-wide effort is made to ensure that the mistakes made before shall not be repeated, that people will no longer tolerate perpetuation or aggrandizement of vast empires at the expense of smaller or backward nations, that the end of this war must mean the end of domination of one country over another, the triumph of right over might, and that the new world order is based on a world society of free nations.

A sincere and optimistic view indeed, which

most Indians share. For the future of India is full of hopes as well as fears. Among others, Indians too are anxiously looking forward to the realization of their aspirations to freedom and progress. But it is not only for mere material or political advancement that India is struggling. Love of freedom is in our very nature; it is a constant urge in man. Human progress, cultural or spiritual, is thwarted in an atmosphere devoid of freedom. In the words of Sir S. Radhakrishnan,

To be deprived of the freedom to solve the problems of one's own country is the most depressing form of spiritual degradation that can be inflicted on the thinking man. No amount of material improvement can compensate for the loss of spiritual dignity. . . . Political freedom means a great release, a soaring of spirit, which will mean healthy renewal of creative activity.

Moreover the problem of India is not unrelated to the problems of the entire civilized world. Indian freedom will not only earn for the United Nations the friendship and goodwill of a self-reliant India, but also ensure world peace.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE ETERNAL COMPANION—BRAHMANANDA. (HIS LIFE AND TEACHINGS). Published by Swami Prabhavananda, Vedanta Society of Southern California, 1946, Ivar Avenue, Hollywood 28, California, U.S.A. Pp. 224. Price \$ 1.50.

One day Sri Ramakrishna had a vision in which he saw the Divine Mother point out to him a boy as being his son, assuring him it was his spiritual son and not a son in the worldly sense. Afterwards when the disciple who was later known as Swami Brahmananda came to him, Sri Ramakrishna at once recognized him as the same boy whom the Divine Mother had shown him in his vision. Swami Brahmananda was one of the most eminent of Sri Ramakrishna's disciples. Of the monastic disciples he was the first to come to the Master and was intimately attached to him till the end. In the book under review are presented the life and teachings of this gigantic spiritual personality. Swami Vivekananda referring to Swami Brahmananda, once said that in spirituality he (the latter) was greater than all the other disciples. Sri Ramakrishna loved Swami Brahmananda deeply, and would often say he was the Eternal Companion of Sri Krishna in a former life. Swami Brahmananda was the first President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. His great personality attracted a number of brilliant young men, many of whom became his disciples and devoted themselves completely to a life of renunciation and service inspired by his living example. Under his fostering care and guidance the work of the Mission made phenomenal progress, and the spiritual growth of the members of the Order was steadily maintained.

Swami Brahmananda is less widely known than some of the other disciples of Sri Ramakrishna to persons outside India, as he did not visit foreign lands or lecture or write much. The compiler of this volume, Swami Prabhavananda, has done invaluable service to the Western world by presenting in a concise and systematic manner the life and teachings of this illumined soul. The teachings of Swami Brahmananda, mostly taken from records of informal talks given to monastic disciples on several occasions, cover more than half

the book and are classified, for convenience, under thirty-two different topical heads. These teachings are incomparable in their directness and simplicity, and offer the most appropriate solutions to various subtle problems with which every spiritual aspirant is faced. Religious or philosophical utterances are, to most people, mere moribund pronouncements. But in these sayings of Swami Brahmananda religion is made living and practical. The Swami's profound spiritual wisdom and superb character have stood as a beacon light on the path to realization to every person that came to him for spiritual consolation. In his teachings Swami Brahmananda laid stress on the value of meditation and *japam* in attaining knowledge and devotion. Although Swami Brahmananda lived continuously in a high state of God-consciousness, he was very natural and human in his behaviour. To those householder disciples who came to him laden with sorrow and troubles he gave a sympathetic hearing and valuable constructive advice. Doctors, lawyers, and other professional men found him capable of discussing their work easily and intelligently, and very often giving them a new angle of approach to their problems. This volume will prove an unfailing source of solace and guidance to all alike at all times and on all occasions. The biographical portion is excellently written, and the teachings are well translated. The book is beautifully printed and handsomely bound.

THE EQUATIONS OF WORLD-ECONOMY. By BENOY KUMAR SARKAR. Published by Chatterjee and Co., Ltd., 15, College Square, Calcutta. Pp. 435. Price Rs. 12.

Dr. Sarkar's books are well known for their thoroughness and scholarship. The present work, *The Equations of World Economy in their Bearings on Post-war Reconstruction*, offers a new dispensation for the present and future humanity in world-state organization and world-planning. It is an analysis as well as a comparison of world economic data. It is a comparative study of the socio-economic life of the different countries of the world. He takes England, Germany, and the

United States as leading examples of well-integrated economic patterns. Russia is, in his opinion, industrially 'backward' compared with these countries. The economy of communistic (which, he says, is nothing but state-capitalistic) socialism is discussed in brief in relation to the capitalistic and the non-capitalistic. The book is divided into eleven chapters, contains four illustrative charts, and has a valuable index appended to it. Population, public health, and social questions have not been left out of these discussions.

The work under review, like the other works of the author, is distinguished by breadth of knowledge and profundity of expression. It has grown out of a number of public lectures delivered at different places on several occasions ; and many of these have been published in various periodicals. According to the author, economics is not independent of technology and industrialism which include not only manufacture but also agriculture and commerce. He adduces cogent reasons and quotes authoritative statistical data in support of his conclusions. His ideas may appear to the orthodox as a bold departure from the traditional school.

*Arthik Unnati* or 'economic progress' is the watch-word of every modern country. The War is reaching its final phase and the problems of demobilization and post-war reconstruction are engaging the attention of public men and the Government. The present work has appeared at an opportune time when its worth will be most appreciated. In these days when militarism and war-organization have made international economic problems more complex, the learned author's elucidation of Indian conditions and their relations to war economy is worth careful study. The publishers are to be congratulated on bringing together in this book Prof. Sarkar's thought-provoking contributions to post-war reconstruction. It is excellent in method and substance, and is of permanent value.

**THE YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO (PART II).**  
By NALINI KANTA GUPTA. Price Re. 1-4 As.

This is a small brochure containing three essays which elucidate and interpret the Yoga of Aurobindo. It is 'the second of a series in which it is proposed to deal with various aspects of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga in their simple and broad outlines'. Aurobindo's well-known work *Life Divine*, in three volumes, has been found difficult to understand by many readers who have aspired to learn about his teachings. To such the book under review will serve as a very convenient and intelligible guide to Aurobindo's philosophy. The pronouncements contained in it may be accepted as authoritative and reliable, as they come from the pen of one closely associated with Aurobindo. The author attempts to make his subject lucid and

understandable to the readers. Yet there are places in it which are not all clear.

Aurobindo's writings are characterized by vast erudition, and a mastery of Eastern and Western thought. But many a lover of Indian philosophy finds himself unable to subscribe to some of Aurobindo's views on Yoga, or to comprehend Aurobindo's strong criticism of the Shankara school of Vedanta, specially *māyāvāda*. Philosophers have always differed ; and Shankara, not unlike Aurobindo, has had his critics too, even from his own times. In a book like this, one would have been happy to see the author present a synthetic picture, harmonizing the various points of view, instead of bringing out the differences sharply. But all the same we are grateful to Mr. Gupta for the services he has rendered to the reading public by bringing within a modest compass the thoughts of a great intellectual of our times. The book under review, together with its earlier volume, will serve as a study preparatory to the more ambitious one of Aurobindo's own works. The get-up of the book is decent and the price reasonable.

**THE CALL OF BADRINATH.** By G. P. NAUTIYAL. Published by Mahesh Nand Sharma & Sons, Frampton Square, Lucknow. Pp. 54. Price As. 10.

The holy shrines of Kedarnath and Badrinath are the two important popular places of pilgrimage in the Himalayas. People from different parts of India visit these shrines in large numbers every year during the season. The booklet under review contains useful information to intending pilgrims and tourists to these places. We congratulate the author on his laudable attempt to offer so much information within a small number of pages. He is well-acquainted with these hills, and his description of the pilgrim routes will serve the purpose of a good guide. The book is profusely illustrated and contains four maps.

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION FOR 1942.** Published by the United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. Pp. 422. Price \$ 1.50.

The Report of the Smithsonian Institution of the United States for the year 1942 has reached us after a long time. Some of the original contributions of outstanding merit are: *Is there Life on the Other Worlds?* by Sir James Jeans ; *The Nutritional Requirements of Men* by C. A. Elvehjem ; *The Sun and the Earth's Magnetic Field* by J. A. Fleming ; and *The Geographical Aspects of Malaria* by Sir Malcolm Watson. We are glad to note that the printing and get-up of the Report have been as good as before in spite of the war conditions. There are many illustrative plates and drawings. It is a valuable contribution to the advancement of scientific learning in all branches.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### ARDHA KUMBHA MELA AT HARDWAR IN APRIL, 1945

#### AN APPEAL

The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal, proposes to organize Medical Relief Work during the ensuing Mela in order to serve the numerous sick and suffering pilgrims. Relief work will be conducted through our permanent Indoor Hospital, one Touring Relief Section, and two Temporary Dispensaries, which will consist in all, of five doctors, five compounders, and a number of dressers and nurses. Our estimated expenditure is Rs. 15,000/-.

We earnestly appeal to the generous public to help us with their liberal contributions for the purpose.

Contributions may kindly be sent to:

1. The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal P.O., Dist. Saharanpur, U.P.
2. The President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Belur Math P.O., Dist. Howrah, Bengal.

### ACTIVITIES OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION IN THE K. AND J. HILLS, ASSAM

Modest but inspired by the highest ideals—that is how the work of the Ramakrishna Mission in the K. and J. Hills, Assam, may be best described. Situated at widely apart points of the hills its educational institutions are symbols of selfless service given in love and humility. Each of them has a record of its own, in the long-felt need that it has removed and the heroic struggle that it has put up to continue in existence in the midst of innumerable difficulties. And if they are still alive and daily growing in utility and popularity, it is chiefly because of the spirit that animates them.

Among these institutions one is a high school situated at Cherrapunjee, rightly termed 'the cultural headquarters of the Khasis.' It has an interesting history of growth and development. Beginning as a primary school it was raised first to the status of a M. E. school and then to that of a high school, urged by the people and aided by their support and co-operation. With its own land and buildings, affiliated and Govt.-aided, the school is now on a firm footing. Besides theoretical education it gives some technical education also, and physical instruction forms an important item in its programme. Love and personal care of the alumni—this is the special feature of the school. One noteworthy fact about these institutions is that their management is largely in the hands of local people. Among others who are on the Managing Committee of the school at Cherrapunjee are such popular figures

of the locality as Dr. H. C. Sing Wahlang, L.M.P., and the Rev. L. S. Diengdoh, B.A., B.D., the former being the vice-president of the Committee.

Like all educational institutions in the country, these institutions also have been very adversely affected by the war. Of course money is the chief difficulty. They find it very hard to keep things going. It is the high school at Cherrapunjee with its heavy recurring expenditure that is having the worst of it. Recently appeals have been made on its behalf for financial help. The local people, themselves by no means affluent, have made a splendid response by contributing over a thousand rupees—a measure of their love of education and the school's popularity. While this money will bring some relief, more help is badly needed to enable it to pull through its present difficulties.

His Excellency the Governor of Assam recently visiting the school with his wife was pleased to say '... the way it has developed in a few years from small beginnings shows that it has been meeting a real need and is a tribute to the standard maintained by the staff, who are rendering careful and devoted service for a minimum of remuneration. . . . The attention given to physical instruction, the various outdoor and manual activities and the recognition of the importance of religion all indicate an earnest desire to give as complete an education as possible, and to train pupils for healthy life and not merely for examination.'

Visiting earlier the Deputy Commissioner, K. and J. Hills, and Political Officer, Khasi States, remarked: '... Here is service on the highest plane. Only big men could spend their lives sharing their gifts and industry among the young of any creed in a spirit of simple rendering to God the things that are God's.'

The object of the Mission's work through this institution as through those others in these hills is two-fold: First, to make available education free from bias for any special religious creed, secondly, to help the children of the hills—the Khasis—to regain contact with the perennial sources of Indianness, which they seem to have lost living in isolation for ages. Very ancient, but, still, full of pluck and go, and possessing political and social institutions that can compare with the best in any progressive society—the Khasis are indeed a wonderful people. Their truthfulness and honesty, their peaceable and trustful nature, their good artisanship and skill in trades, their adaptability and enterprise—all these are proverbial. If only they can be made to fit into the matrix of larger Indian life, without of course any interruption in the pursuit of their own ideals, they will then serve better not only their own narrow racial interests but also the national interests of the whole of India.

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. L

APRIL, 1945



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वराञ्जिबोधत ।”

“Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI SIVANANDA

BELUR MATH, MAY 1920

Afternoon. Sj. Gangacharan Mukherjee, pleader, Monghyr, has come. With him are his daughter and a few other members of his family.

Bowing low to Mahapurush Maharaj Gangacharan Babu remarked: ‘Maharaj, you look so pulled down ! You’re much worse than I saw when I came here last year.’

Maharaj: ‘Yes. The health is really very bad. And it’s going from bad to worse every day. Well, the body must pass through the six phases\* of change. With my body, the final phase has begun. That’s inevitable. The very nature of the body makes it so. All bodies must perish some day or other.’

Gangacharan Babu: ‘Every letter I got (from the Math) kept saying your health has completely broken down. That’s why I’ve come to see you. I was ever so anxious to see you.’

Maharaj (smiling): ‘What’s there in this sort of meeting—meeting on the physical plane? The real meeting is inside, on the spiritual plane. And there’s the same indwelling God in everybody. This whole universe has emanated from Him. “From

\* Birth, existence, growth, tendency to decay, decay, and destruction.

Him have originated life, mind, sense-organs, ether, air, light, water, and the earth which is the support of all things. All created things have come from Him. And He’s their governor.’ “For fear of Him shines the sun.” Again in Him do they merge when they are destroyed. This world originates from Him, functions in Him and goes back to Him when destroyed. Birth and death —these are inevitable. There’s no escape from them. Only God is beyond their pale. He’s free from disease, free from death. By nature He is pure—enlightened, free. The goal of life is to realize Him within. That’s the *summum bonum* of life. And when that’s achieved, it’s immaterial whether the body remains or goes. He’s within ourselves. Self of everything, abode of bliss, He’s in every being. Only we must realize that.’

Gangacharan Babu: ‘Maharaj, I’ve a question to ask. Must all of us pass into spiritual bodies after death?’

Maharaj: ‘Why should it be so? Those who are devotees of God, have real love for Him—why should they have spiritual bodies? They all become one with God, they become free.’

Gangacharan Babu: 'But, then, what's the meaning of those rites that are enjoined to be performed after death? And why is it that they together with the rites to be performed yearly are prescribed in all cases irrespective of everything?'

Maharaj: 'Yes. That's right. But it's only a general rule. And as it happens, all observe it. But in special cases—in the case of your wife, for instance, there's no harm if those rites are not observed. Your wife was a rare devotee. Her case is very special. She has gone straight into Heaven after death. This has been revealed to me in a clear vision. She has attained to a high order of spiritual existence.'

Suddenly Gangacharan Babu burst into a loud wail. He fell at Mahapurush Maharaj's feet and with folded hands and tearful eyes, begged, 'Maharaj, you must grant me a prayer. See that I may have real love for, real faith in, the lotus feet of Mother (Holy Mother). See that I may find refuge in her feet.' Saying this he began to weep like a boy.

Mahapurushjee putting his hand on Gangacharan Babu's head said: 'Yes, my child. You shall have them. You've them already. Now they'll increase. I bless you with all my heart. I assure you, child, Mother's very kind to you.'

Gangacharan Babu: 'If only you plead for me, Mother'll surely listen to you. You're my support, my hope.'

Maharaj: 'Of course Mother'll listen to me. She'll listen to you, too. She listens to everyone who calls on her with a guileless heart and with real earnestness. Grace, grace. Without her grace there's no way. Glory unto the Lord, Glory unto Gracious Thakur.'

Gangacharan Babu felt comforted by his blessing. After a short discussion on other things he and his party got ready to leave. One by one they paid respects to Mahapurush Maharaj. Gangacharan Babu's daughter, too, paid her respects and then begged for his blessings.

Maharaj (in a voice full of sympathy): 'May you enjoy peace, my child! May your husband, your children and other relatives be happy. There's hardly any happiness in the world. Compared to sorrows and sufferings happiness is negligible. Still they who are

devotees of God are comparatively happy. However much they suffer, they're not moved. For they know everything is a gift from God. He who gives happiness gives also pain and sorrow. Knowing everything to be His blessing they suffer without complaint. They're not overjoyed with happiness nor upset with sorrow. As worldly happiness is transitory, only for a moment; so is also worldly sorrow. They come and go. They don't last. The only permanent thing, the only source of peace, is God. Stick to Him, mother; then only will you get peace.'

A small girl—a maiden, bowed to Maharaj. Touching her head he said, 'They all are Mother Hershelf. "All women are you, Mother, in different forms."

A little before evening a lady-devotee paid her respects and asked, 'Maharaj, how's your health?'

Maharaj: 'Not good. The body's old; how can it be well again?'

Lady-devotee: 'And you can't eat much food, either?'

Maharaj: 'Only a plain soup and rice at noon, and a little milk at night. I can't eat more than this. And I don't feel like eating more, either. There's not the least desire to eat delicacies. Food is only for keeping up the body. A little food, therefore, is essential. So that I may have strength enough to think of God so long as the body's there. There's no other desire than that I may think of God. To see Thakur in the heart—that's all that matters. Father, mother, brother, friend, comrade—they all are short-lived. The world itself will be left where it is after your death. Only the in-dwelling God is and will be there always. He alone is eternal.'

Lady-devotee: 'What's our way, Maharaj? We're creatures caught in the meshes of *mâyâ*. By our attachment to this world we're bringing our own ruin. We simply can't give it up. We suffer so much; still it's there.'

Maharaj: 'God is the only way. Take refuge in Him. He's everything—father, mother, brother, or friend. Call on Him with sincere longing. He'll surely take pity. In this world of misery He's the only source of peace. Thakur used to say how to the camel happiness means eating thorny herbs. To worldly men also happiness

means something like that. His grace—that's the only way, mother.'

After a short pause he continued: 'Is it a joke to be convinced of the unreality of the world? Only His grace makes that

possible. Weep and pray intensely; then only His grace will come. He's there inside. He becomes known when the veil of *mâyâ* is removed. Grace, grace—that's the only way.'

## THE LOWERING OF SPIRITUAL STANDARDS

BY THE EDITOR

### I

Modern scientific achievements bid fair to make a new heaven of this earth of ours. Everyday we get news of fresh wonders being worked by scientists. Professor Haldane says that no limit can be set to human progress if science be permitted to take matters in hand. In the new millennium that science promises us, we shall have comforts undreamt of even in the heavens of the Hindus, or the paradise of the Muslims. The Christian paradise is a poor place in comparison, gloomy and nebulous, with little comforts except the singing of perpetual *Te Deum*s or *Ave Marias* and occasional flights with the aid of bright and rustling wings as messengers of the Almighty to some favoured mortals on earth.

The applications of science we see all around us. Vegetables are raised chemically in the deserts of California; they are raised in hot-houses, fed with the water of hot springs in Iceland, a land of ice and snow. Scientific dairying has put into man's hand vast quantities of milk, butter, and cheese. Scientific breeding has given better beef, pork, and mutton. New varieties of wheat and rice have been discovered or raised, which will do away with all fear of starvation, because of their phenomenal yields. Science promises to produce synthetic fibres that will rival if not beat in fineness and finish Dacca muslins or Japanese silks or English wools. The harnessing of electric power promises to do away with the ordinary drudgery and dirt of cooking with coal or fire-wood, and to make of the kitchen a place of magic, where for the pushing of a button, palatable viands, undreamt of even in the *Arabian Nights*, are made ready to please the most fastidious palate. The elec-

tric light and the electric torch have destroyed the fears that darkness had for us as children. Electricity has given us the telegraph, the telephone, and the radio; and television is in the process of becoming an everyday affair. In the sphere of locomotion, railway trains were the first wonders; then came the motor-cars and electric trains, and steamships. Now it is the age of aeroplanes, mighty roaring monsters of the sky, flitting like meteors ever and anon. Ships have become out of date for passengers. Similarly great are the wonders in engineering, medicine, and other spheres into which the scientific spirit has entered. The world war is demonstrating what science can do when applied to the purpose of forging weapons of destruction.

### II

Science, in its essence, represents a mastery of the forces of nature to be used for the personal purposes of man. The knowledge that science puts into man's hand can be used both for purposes of destruction as well as construction, for the destruction of one's enemies and the advancement of the interest of one's friends and oneself. As to whether our strength derived from the application of science ought to be used against those whom we consider, rightly or wrongly, our enemies, is a question which many scientists don't bother to think about. This is because in the first flush of success in scientific research, workers in scientific fields concentrated on the particular with a corresponding neglect of the general. Such an attitude was also considered to be a sign of wisdom. Specialization was carried to extremes and the typical scientific worker, though a master at his job, was completely ignorant of nearly all other related things. The result is 'the old

idea of comprehensiveness waned until today it is hidden by the inco-ordinated pile of specialized knowledge, one of the surest ways of acquiring intellectual short-sightedness'. Also the scientific spirit has not permeated seriously the fields of vital problems, and even where it has entered it is characterized by the evils of specialization, by 'intellectual short-sightedness'. The science of human conduct, collective and individual, the whither and wherefore of human endeavour, the problems posed by ethics and religion have been studiously avoided by scientists in general, where they have not been ignored as sentimental folly. This attitude has resulted in grave results to the morals of mankind.

### III

The denial of God and the soul, and the future life as unproved figments of the imaginations of people suffering from the 'mental deconcentration which affects those within sight of the grave' has led to an undermining of faith in morality, goodness, justice, and mercy. The grim theories of racial superiority and ruthless struggles for national or racial survivals have gripped the minds of the leaders of nations with the result that mankind is threatened with extinction by internecine warfare.

Individuals also seem to have lost their moral bearings. Freudian psychology, by revealing the true nature of the unconscious in every human being, has left ordinary people with a vague idea that they are under the thumb of complexes like the Oedipus and others, and have therefore no moral responsibility for the operation of impulses that tend to lower them to the level of beasts. While admitting fresh air into the noxious drains of psycho-pathology, Freudian psychology has tended to vitiate at the same time the purer atmosphere of the conscious life. Far be it from us to condemn Freud or the later psychologists as responsible for this misapprehension and misapplication by the general public of the knowledge which they have so laboriously acquired and applied to the benefit of suffering humanity. But the tendency in human nature is to find a scapegoat for one's mistakes. The knowledge of the unconscious has been misapplied by inculcating in the minds of people, young and old, the idea that they are almost automatons swayed by impulses

which are beyond their control, and that efforts at controlling such impulses only lead to repressed complexes which may lead to mental and physical ailments. Therefore, it is argued, what one should do to ensure mental and physical health is to give full reins to one's inclinations and passions without caring to consider whether they are harmful to oneself in the long run or whether such a course is not ultimately anti-social. Moral and social standards of conduct are valid, it would seem, only so long as one is not thwarted in the fulfilment of one's personal desires.

Thus life today seems to move in a 'materialistic science and philosophy which cannot rise above the satisfactions of flesh in morals, and domination over the world in politics,' —the natural consequence of a philosophy of life that cannot see beyond the 'confines of sensuous and pragmatic experience'.

### IV

All religions worth the name have, however, held up certain standards of conduct, certain 'oughts' and 'don'ts' based upon what they conceive to be the *sine qua non* for attaining the ends they consider as supremely good. Religious teachers of all ages, out of love for their fellowmen, have pondered deeply on the problems of life, and have placed before the world what seemed to them to be the greater ends which human beings individually and collectively ought to pursue in order to attain, in their lives, an ever-growing richness and satisfaction, increasing peace and happiness.

It is a significant fact that a great unanimity of views exists among most religious teachers as to what this aim should be. All of them emphasize that man's chief aim should be to aspire towards a perfection which, they say from their own experience, is possible for all men if only they make the necessary effort. They all testify to the reality of the conception that there is God who helps human beings to reach towards Him, if they sincerely pray to Him and endeavour earnestly to tread on the path that leads to Him.

It is true that conceptions of God vary in details in all religions. This is due to the fact that the conception of God in all its fullness is a very difficult one, and not to

be grasped easily by untrained minds. But the difficulty or the manifold complexity of an idea is no criterion of its want of pragmatic value or of its being not true to the real nature of things. To illustrate the matter from a familiar fact, we all believe in the existence of electricity by what we see of its effects. It has various effects: it gives us light; it has magnetic properties; it gives us heat without smoke; and it can send men to death in a second. We see its operations in the telegraph, the telephone, and the wireless. And yet even the best scientific brain can give us no clear idea of what it is in words which all can understand. Rather we find scientists tending to develop a language of their own, in mathematical symbols and equations of which the layman can make neither head nor tail. The layman is simply aghast at the wonders scientists are able to achieve; and just as in previous ages there developed great faith in religious leaders who were able to convince and convert large numbers of men to their views by their faith, works, and personality, so in modern times people tend to develop a great faith in whatever the scientists say, for they seem to produce the goods, seem to give tangible evidence which carries conviction. So the attack of science on religious belief seems to carry weight by the mere prestige of scientific achievements rather than on the merits. As a result religion commands little respect from the majority of modern men and women to whom science promises to do away with the necessity for any religion whatsoever. Hence without any belief in God to guide them, without any controlling aim in life except the one, which science proclaims, of living the physical life in all its fullness and drinking the cup of pleasures to the dregs, modern youths are practically bereft of idealism. Considering all ideas of good and bad, right and wrong, as traditional social taboos, elevated to unworthy heights of sacredness under the sanctimonious titles of morality and religion, they are taking to ways of conduct which are ultimately bound to lead to the decay of the individual as well as human society.

## V

Purposive endeavour is the characteristic of all life, and purpose is as much a principle obtaining in the operations of Nature as the

principle of determinism to which alone hard-headed scientists would like to pin their faith. McDougall has exposed the short-sightedness which makes some scientists deny the purposiveness of all vital endeavour, and he has adequately recognized the great value of purposiveness in life's activities. In India this fact was recognized from time immemorial, and all civilization developed on the principle that human life *ought* to be guided by certain conscious aims. The forces contributing towards the realization of those desired and desirable aims were to be cultivated and strengthened, while all forces acting as barriers were to be avoided or destroyed. The greatest stress was put upon the value of inhibition as a method in the development of the individual as well as society. Inhibition of desires and activities that were antagonistic to the proclaimed and accepted aims for the individual and society was inculcated as the means to realizing the end.

The achievement of spiritual perfection or the realization of God was considered as the highest aim of human endeavour. To those who were not ready for accepting the highest aim of human life, to whom the objective world of senses was very intimately real, and the claims of which upon their attention were too imperious to be ignored, the aim was held up, not of the extinction of all desires, but of the proper choosing of right desires, desires not in conflict with *dharma* or righteousness, and of the avoidance of all desires and activities that lead to greater misery both for the individual and society. A man might have desires, both good and bad, for himself and for society. The good ones he should try to get fulfilled, the bad ones he ought to discard by discriminating on their baneful effects. No sane man willingly or consciously wants to ruin himself. Everybody desires what, according to his lights, is best for himself. It is only through ignorance, through a partial or complete misapprehension of the results or consequences that may follow a particular course of action that a man comes to grief. Hence the necessity for acquiring knowledge at all costs. For it is only knowledge that ultimately saves. 'Whatever is done with knowledge, with faith, and in the manner taught by the teacher becomes crowned with full success,' says the Vedic seer. And steadfastness in the pursuit of one's life-

aims is the *sine qua non* for integration of personality and for mental peace. Having once selected one's aim in life one should not deviate from it until one has reached what one had set out to achieve. Not in satisfaction of immediate ends without reference to the supreme aim in life, but in the subordination of immediate satisfactions to an all-absorbing ideal or aim lies the way of psychological integration of personality and spiritual progress.

But because of their own inability to strive for the highest, lesser minds have always tried to shelter their inferiority complex under the cloak of an ill-concealed denial of higher values in a life beyond the sensuous, beyond the throbbing, thrilling pleasures and joys of ordinary experience. All strivings for God and perfection are condemned by such as the inane efforts of individuals suffering from physical and psychological frustration. This is the great danger that is confronting modern minds lost in the mist of the materialistic philosophy, a mist that has risen out of the warmth of the morning sun of scientific knowledge and achievements. But, as we have said before, Western science has not yet addressed itself seriously and impartially to the sciences affecting man most closely such as psychology, sociology, and religion. The more it does so, the less it will be guilty of ignoring the fundamental values of human aims and of giving a false lead to individuals and nations.

## VI

There should be a stop to this lowering of spiritual standards. Because one finds marriage necessary for oneself, one need not disparage the virtues of continence. Nor should the modern laxity in sexual matters be a handle in the hands of voluptuous hypocrisy for decrying the virtue of chastity and the sanctity of the unsullied home of happily married couples. Because one finds it impossible to lead a life of meditation and sustained thinking on spiritual matters on account of one's pre-occupation with the

things of ordinary life, one need not gratuitously decry the spiritually-minded contemplatives and dub them 'mystics'. To a gentleman who told Sri Ramakrishna that his visions and devotion to the Divine Mother were all due to a strain of madness in him, he answered, 'How does it stand to reason that I become mad because I have been constantly thinking and meditating on God, goodness, love, and other spiritual things, while you consider yourself sane even though your whole life is being spent in thinking of physical things like home, money, women, and wine?'

We would say thus to people engrossed in the enjoyments of this world, in accumulating wealth, and in exploiting other groups or nations : 'Earn money by all means, but don't say that mammon-worship is the only real thing in life. Indulge in companionate marriages, weekly or monthly divorces, and what not, but for decency's sake don't parade it as the way of the gods, and condemn those who lead a pure and virtuous life, to be exhibited in the show-cases of modern civilization as curiosities of an out-worn age. Let capitalists and imperialists suck the life-blood of other helpless groups, races, and nations, and wax fat like vampires gorging themselves with the blood of their victims, but let there be intellectual honesty and decency, and let them not delude others by saying that these are the fruits of Christian spirituality and Western democracy. Let there be no lowering of spiritual standards and values. President Roosevelt is reported to have said that the Atlantic Charter, like the Sermon on the Mount, was an ideal to be aimed at, though they may woefully fall far short of it in practice. In his endeavours to make America economically and politically supreme in the world he has not, at least, lowered spiritual standards by calling bad things by good names. Let all men, leaders as well as rank and file, be honest with themselves. For, in sincerity, in correspondence between one's thought, word, and action lies spiritual salvation.'

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN THE WEST

BY SWAMI ATULANANDA

It is a curious fact that until about a century ago the West knew absolutely nothing about Vedanta, the greatest system of religion and philosophy the world has ever produced. A few scholars in Germany were the first to take up the study of Sanskrit. Charmed by the beauty of the language and the ideas expressed therein, they began to delve into the knowledge of the East. And they extracted from Hindu scriptures nuggets of wisdom which they presented to the world in their mother-tongue. Thus the West got her first knowledge of the religion of the Hindus. This knowledge, however, did not spread among the people. The Theosophists, much later, tried to popularize it in America and Europe, but the great push Hinduism received in the West came from Swami Vivekananda, the illumined prophet, who in 1893 at Chicago delivered his first Address on Hinduism. This, as we all know, was received with an outburst of enthusiasm from his astonished audience.

Among the great majority of that august assembly, Hinduism, or Vedanta, was unknown. They had a vague idea that all Hindus were idolators with strange superstitions and hideous forms of worship. The utterances of the Swami on that occasion came to them as a revelation. And from that moment the picturesque monk became the great attraction at the Congress. This was the beginning of the Swami's great and fruitful work in America. This was the real introduction of Vedanta among Western races.

To give in short the full story of the Swami's experiences and of his meteoric career in the West, is an utter impossibility. The four years he spent abroad were too full of events. And I shall give only the most significant of these confining myself to his sojourn in America only. I can only touch on his not less important and interesting adventures in England and the continent of Europe.

First of all let us examine the Swami's

state of mind before he finally decided to sail for the West. We must remember that in those days, that is, over fifty years ago, it was no simple matter for a Hindu Sannyāsin to go to the West. No other Sannyāsin had ever ventured to cross the ocean and live among Western people. Orthodox Hindus shook their heads. They did not find the act sanctioned in their *shāstras*.

Then there were personal considerations. Pioneer work is always beset with difficulties. Would the West accept him? Would he be provided for? Would he succeed? And then there was the one great question towering above all other considerations, Was it God's will?

The conquest of the Western thought-world by a young Sannyāsin from the East was a gigantic undertaking. The Swami, then only 28 years old, was fully aware of this. Still, this was the enormous task that faced him. And unless this was accomplished his attempt could not be called successful. No wonder a mighty tumult agitated the Swami's mind. Should he go to America or not go? That was then the question.

Sometimes for days his soul struggled for a definite conviction about his mission. Was it his own ambition that sometimes thrilled him with anticipation, or was it God's command that made him so restless? Was it his duty to extend the scope of his work and to gather new experience in foreign lands, or was he influenced by the enthusiasm of his friends and admirers?

Intuitively the Swami felt that it was his duty to go, that he had a message not only for his own country but for the world. But he was not satisfied to trust to his own conviction. He wanted more tangible proof, a definite sign, a command from above.

And so the Swami spent days and weeks in prayer and contemplation. Then, at last, the command came. It came in an unexpected, mysterious way.

One night, when this all-important ques-

tion had kept him awake for hours, he at last fell into a slumber. And in this state of half sleep he had a dream and vision.

He saw a vast ocean. And on the sea-shore he saw a figure. The figure was pacing up and down evidently immersed in deep thought. Then suddenly it halted facing him. A shock of delight went through the Swami, for there stood before him Sri Ramakrishna, his own beloved Master. There was sadness in the Master's face. But this sadness made room for a smile so sweet, so gentle, so loving, that it thrilled the Swami to his deepest being. Then the Master beckoned him, and turning around walked away upon the waters of the ocean. The Swami wanted to jump up and follow him. But then he awoke.

It was enough! Sri Ramakrishna had called him, had beckoned him to follow across the ocean. There was the command from above! The Swami's doubts were laid. All fear and restlessness left him. And in an ecstasy of joy, in the night, he exclaimed, 'Where thou leadest I will follow, even if it be to the end of the earth.'

Thus reassured and strengthened in his purpose and conviction, the Swami prepared himself for the journey. And on May 31st, 1893, he sailed for America.

As the steamer was detached from the wharf at Bonbay and slowly moved away, the Swami stood on the deck looking towards his friends who had come to bid him God-speed. With folded hands he blessed them and gave them his farewell benediction.

His eyes were filled with tears. His heart was overwhelmed with emotion. He thought of those whom he left behind ; of the Holy Mother who had sent him her blessings; of his *gurubhais* who were scattered over the land he was leaving; of India, his beloved motherland, once so great, now the land of suffering.

But as the ship steamed on and he found himself surrounded by the black waters of the ocean, alone with his thoughts and the vastness of sea and sky, his mind took a more cheerful turn. He realized the wisdom of his decision. He felt the guiding hand of a Power greater than his. Yes, he thought, we Indians must travel, we must go to foreign lands, we must see how society is organized in other countries, and we must

keep in touch with the minds of other nations. If we do this, India will rise again, and we will become a nation among nations.

The journey proved enjoyable and instructive. Fellow passengers were congenial. The Captain of the ship took an interest in the Swami and treated him with courtesy and respect.

From Bombay the steamer went to Colombo, thence to Hongkong and Japanese ports, halting at the different harbours for coaling or discharge of cargo. The passengers at these places went ashore, and the Swami was delighted to see the interesting sights.

At last the long journey was over and the ship anchored at Vancouver in British Columbia. Then came a three-days' trip by train to Chicago. Here, at last, the Swami stood on American soil! From the land of poverty transplanted as it were to the land of untold riches; from the land of deprivation to the land of luxury; from the land of renunciation to the land of worldly enjoyment!

But this was not the time for reflections. There he stood in one of the busiest railway stations in the world, alone, as stranger in a strange land. Where to go? What to do?

For those of us who have not been in the West it may be difficult to realize what Swami Vivekananda had to meet and overcome. He was not used to handling money, he had never travelled in foreign lands, (his baggage was a burden to him, his strange dress made him conspicuous, prices for everything were fabulous,) he met with customs with which he was unacquainted.

Now, at Chicago he found himself in the midst of a mass of restless hurrying humanity chiefly visitors from all over the world who had come to the great Fair. There he stood in the enormous railway station. Not knowing where to go he entered the waiting room, and then he contemplated his next move.

A hotel clerk approached him, and asked him to come to his hotel. The Swami followed him and in the hotel was shown a room. There he sat down, glad to be away from the noise and bustle of the street.

'Now I will have quiet', the Swami thought, 'but where have I come? What a rush, what a noise, what madness! Every-

one is running and hurrying hither and thither as if a demon was pursuing him. Is this America? Shall I have to live in this confusion? Oh, blessed India, land of leisure! Oh, blessed Himalayas, abode of peace!'

The Swami wiped his perspiring brow. Then a knock came at the door. His baggage had arrived. The porters demanded exorbitant charges. 'Shiva, Shiva,' the Swami thought, 'where we pay with annas in India I have to pay with dollars here. Has money no value in this land? Where shall I get a new supply when my purse is empty? Dollars here vanish like air. Money flows like water.'

The Swami was weary and confused. Restless and nervous, he paced the floor. He tried to calm his mind but could not. Despondent, he sank into an easy chair. Then with great effort he withdrew his mind from his surroundings. He entered within himself. And as he did so, there flashed before his mental vision the scene of the battle-field of Kurukshetra. He seemed to hear the din and clatter of the contending armies. And above this noise Sri Krishna's voice roaring like thunder, 'Yield not to unmanliness, O son of Pritha. Cast off this faintheartedness and arise! He who sees inaction in action he is wise, he is a Yogi, he is free!'

The Swami jumped to his feet. And shaking off all weakness he stood there like a lion ready for battle. The rest of the day he spent in his room. But early the following morning he set out to visit the World's Fair. What he saw there filled him with wonder and enthusiasm. Here the Western world was represented in all her riches and glory. He was amazed at the ingenuity of the human mind in the field of art, science, and invention. And with a bleeding heart he contemplated how backward his own dear motherland was in these directions.

Daily he visited the Fair. He learned all he could so that later he might be able to use his knowledge and experience for the good of his countrymen. He realized that in organization and united effort lay the strength of the West. India had to become a united whole before she would be able to hold her own among the nations of the world.

While visiting the Fair, Swami Viveka-

nanda enquired about the Parliament of Religions. To his utter dismay he found that the Religious Congress would not commence till September. Furthermore he could not be admitted as a delegate as he had no credentials. And it was too late to enlist anyhow.

What a blow! Had he come all this distance in vain? It was only July. His money had dwindled to almost nothing. What could be done? It was a serious dilemma.

Fortunately a gentleman from Madras had written about the Swami to an American friend in Chicago. This friend found him and invited him to his home. He was received with hospitality, and became an honoured guest. He soon won the love and respect of the entire household.

Here the Swami stayed twelve days. Then he decided to go to Boston, the centre of culture in America. On his way a strange thing happened. In the train an elderly lady was attracted by the Swami's appearance and dignified behaviour. Charmed by his personality and wisdom, after a long conversation, she invited the Swami to her home near Boston. The Swami accepted. When he had entered the train he had not known where to put up in Boston. Now he was taken to a beautiful home of culture where he was introduced to a large number of distinguished visitors.

Among these was Prof. Wright of Harvard University. The Professor, after many intimate talks with Swami Vivekananda, became greatly interested in him. He insisted that the Swami should represent Hinduism at the Religious Congress. 'This', he said, 'is the only way by which you can be introduced to the nation at large.' 'But I have no credentials', the Swami said. At this the Professor smiled and said, 'Swami, to ask you for credentials would be like questioning the sun his right to shine.' And he wrote a letter to the Chairman of the Committee for selecting delegates, in which he wrote: 'Swami Vivekananda is a man more learned than all our learned professors put together. We must have him as a speaker at the Fair.' Then he gave the Swami a letter of introduction to the Committee in-charge of Oriental delegates, and paying for his passage, sent him back to Chicago.

How wonderful ! After all, the Swami's trip to the West would not be in vain.

But God's children often meet with great difficulties. They are tried again and again in the crucible of faith. And a new trial awaited the Swami. When he arrived at Chicago he found that he had lost the address of the President of the Committee.

With an almost empty purse the Swami went in search of a cheap hotel. But he could find none. In his search he had wandered into the German section of the City inhabited by emigrants of the labouring class. These people knew very little English. They could not understand what the Swami wanted. And taking him to be a Negro treated him with little respect.

It was almost night when the Swami came to a railway yard. Here he found an empty freight car. He entered it, and being utterly exhausted he lay down and fell asleep.

On the following morning he walked out, and soon found himself in the most fashionable part of Chicago. He was hungry, and began to beg his food at the palatial dwelling houses. But his shabby appearance aroused suspicion, and the servants slammed the doors in his face. At last, tired and disheartened, he sat down upon the roadside opposite a fashionable residence. Then, to his great surprise he saw a richly dressed lady come out of the house and approach him. In a sweet cultured voice she spoke, 'Sir, are you a delegate to the Parliament of Religions ?'

The Swami told his story. After listening to it the lady invited him to her home. Here he was shown into a beautiful room, and after a bath and breakfast was taken to the headquarters of the Committee. He was accepted as a delegate, and lodging was given him with other orientals. Now all anxiety was removed. The Swami's heart melted with gratitude for the divine guidance. He felt that a divine power was protecting him.

And so, at last, the day arrived for the opening of the Parliament of Religions. It was September 11th, 1893. On that memor-

able morning there sat upon the platform of the great Hall of Columbus representatives of the religious beliefs of twelve hundred million of the human race. It was indeed impressive ! And among these greatest divines of the world sat Swami Vivekananda, clad in orange robe and turban, his remarkably fine features and brilliant eyes distinguishing him in that great throng.

Cardinal Gibbons, highest prelate of the Roman Catholic Church, rose and opened the meeting with prayer. High dignitaries of the Christian Church delivered their orations followed by representatives of the East. At last, at the request of the Chairman, Swami Vivekananda rose.

His face glowed with fire, and in a vibrant voice addressing his audience of six thousand men and women he spoke, 'Sisters and Brothers of America'.

It was as if an electric shock passed through the audience. Their hearts were touched. A stranger from a strange land was the first to address them as 'Sisters and Brothers.' A storm of applause followed and when the Swami had finished his address the entire assembly was at his feet.

The Congress met for seventeen days. Over a thousand papers were read. The Swami gave several Addresses, and read several papers on Hinduism. He was the most popular speaker. The audience would sometimes wait for hours when other speakers held the platform, to hear a few words from the inspired lips of the Hindu monk.

From an obscure, wandering Sannyasin, the Swami had become a world-figure. Life-size pictures of him were posted up everywhere in the streets of Chicago. The press rang with his fame. The newspapers proclaimed him as a prophet. All this the Swami accepted in a child-like spirit without a trace of conceit. In humility he bowed down to 'Him who makes the dumb eloquent, Him who makes the lame cross mountains'.

*(To be concluded)*

## THE FUTURE OF HINDUISM

By SWAMI ADIDEVANANDA

From time immemorial India always stood for the highest spiritual values; and if we have to regain the sense of spiritual values, we must not only face the challenge of the alluring materialism of modern scientific thought, but also give a new shape to the ancient philosophic thought of India in order that it may appeal to the modern scientific intelligence in India and abroad. While there is so much confusion around us, an extraordinary phenomenon strikes us with a glimmer of hope: a widespread interest in the study of Hinduism is increasing by leaps and bounds. There is a reaction from the conservatism of the last century, and a large number of books on the Upanishads, the Gita, the *Upanishads*, and other Vedantic works are being published without any break.

It is an admitted fact that Christian doctrines have withered in the psychological situation created by modern scientific discoveries and have been replaced by an utter agnosticism. Various causes have accelerated the drift from the churches; and Sunday outdoor trips are breaking up the solemn church-going party. One important reason for the alienation of the educated classes from the church is the pugnacious quarrels of bishops over questions of dogma. Moreover, intelligent people are finding it difficult to have faith in a religion which blesses war time and again, and in ministers of the gospel of love who exhort men to kill other men whom they have never seen. The part which science has played in demolishing the citadel of Christianity is indeed enormous. The scientific account of the universe has exploded the old theory of creation of the world in seven days. Finally, the view that all men are merely promoted anthropoid apes, having the small lemur-like creature for their primordial ancestor, has come as a severe shock stultifying the belief in the doctrine of the Fall which had taught Christians to believe that they were only degenerate angels.

The outcome of all this is a reaction of the present generation against the faiths and morals of the Victorian age, which has ended

in a flagrant repudiation of the values and standards of the Christian way of life. The attempt of some enlightened representatives of the Church, like Dean Inge and Bishop Barnes, to accept the conclusions of science and revise, and even reject certain jaded dogmas in the light of science, has not successfully checked the spirit of the age, namely, absolute disbelief in the old gods and angels. We have to regretfully realize that Christ's dream of bringing the Kingdom of Heaven to the earth is too transcendent for our petty minds that cannot grasp the fundamental truth of religion.

The impact of science on the credulity of people who burnt not less than three-quarters of a million women as witches in one single province of Europe is quite understandable. One can easily appreciate the rejection of outworn beliefs such as the Creation story and the Flood story of a people who cannot give up the idea of a fixed earth and a reinforced heaven even after Copernicus had destroyed the supremacy of man's planet and proved it to be an ordinary lump of matter gyrating round the sun. But it is rather intriguing to find how Hinduism, the rational religion of the Vedanta which has survived many a shock in the past, is menaced by the blitz of Western ideas. In spite of the non-contradiction of our metaphysics with any theory of evolution which may have to trace our ancestors to the jelly-fish and the amoeba, evidences are not wanting to indicate that a state of danger, like the Sword of Damocles, is hanging over the whole structure of Hinduism, the religion *par excellence*.

What is the state of religion in this country today? If an annual return is prepared showing the number of educated people attending temples, Maths, and other holy places with a view to benefit spiritually, we may discover, to our great surprise, a considerable drop in the number. In our schools and colleges millions of students are not receiving any sort of religious instruction in their class-rooms. If a questionnaire is cir-

culated among the students on the state of their religious belief, we may possibly expect to get replies of Himalayan ignorance. The great monasteries which were once the power-house of spirituality and theological learning are now quiet and vacant, and attract no pilgrims; the Maths are quite content to sleep in their present state without in any way trying to influence the practical ethics and morals of the society. The colossal monolithic temples which enshrine the symbols of the Deity are now infested with bats, rats, and other vermin; the court-yards and artistic Mandapams of the temples of Spirit are dirty, ill-kept, and uninviting. Besides, the secular, ignorant, and commercial-minded priest (of course, save the real servants of God) insults the spiritual feeling of any devotee with his repulsive attitude. The Upanayanam, marriage, obsequies, and other rites are performed in a most mechanical and meaningless manner. Both the teacher and the taught are equally ignorant of the meaning and significance of the *mantrams*. Where is that race which produced immortal works of art in stone and palm-leaf? The families, noted for thinkers and writers in Vedanta, Dharma-shastra, Jyotisha, and other departments of Sanskritic learning, are sending their children to English schools so that they may become successful clerks and eke out a livelihood. While the Vedantic spirit is fading away from our life, the doctors of philosophy are as keen as ever in their futile controversies which never touch the fundamental issues. The decline of spiritual convictions and irreverent attitude towards the achievements of the past are the two disintegrating elements which remind us of the spirit of the age; unbecoming dances and sensual music, the craze for pleasure and the twilight of nobler sentiments are some expressions of the above tendency.

Now, what are those factors which are mainly operative in reducing our national ideals to their present pass? Broadly speaking, they are as follows :

1. First among the factors that have brought about our degeneration is the present system of education which does not suit the soil of India. This system of education, in sub-ordinating spirituality to Western

learning, has buried, as it were, the birth of future India. "But mark you," says Swami Vivekananda, "if you give up spirituality or leave it aside to go after the materializing civilization of the West, the result will be that in three generations you will be an extinct race. Because the backbone of the nation will then be broken, the foundation upon which the edifice has been built will then be undermined, and the result will be a smash, an all-round annihilation."

2. The second constituent that is eating into the vitals of our spiritual life is the blind superstitious orthodoxy. From the standpoint of social life no religion in the world is so capable of dynamic transformation as Hinduism. Still it is a pity that we have taken every local superstition and contradictory custom as essential to our spiritual life. Again, in the words of the Swami, "the greatest mistake, therefore, is to think that in these local customs lies the essence of our religion".
3. The third important factor that has damaged the fabric of Hinduism is the influence of modern science. If in the West modern science has alienated educated people from the Church, we also think without trying to know the A B C of Hinduism, that our religion also must be equally worthless and meaningless. So, the vainglorious Westernized mind endeavours to trace the origin of our religion in the emotions and fears of primeval man though it cannot explain the spiritual character which has emerged from the soul of a civilized people.

The conclusion is inevitable. Hinduism began and flourished,—not because primitive man wanted it, not because it rose from man's nature,—but because the gigantic minds of our forefathers considered that religion and spirituality were alone the backbone of our national life. They cared neither for politics, nor for social regeneration, nor for scientific genius as an end in itself, for

they were convinced that these things were of secondary importance. So if the rejection of all that is best in Hinduism is the spirit of our era, then the future must be one without any light and hope. Even those who hoped for a panacea from the West are disillusioned now after the breaking out of the second world conflagration.

The remedy has to be found out in the light of our ancient teachings, so that we may not forget our duty towards God and man. Even the atheistic thinkers of the West have begun to confess that without some system of morals to discipline the wild passions, some idealism to purify the profane fetishism, man's life would be meaningless. And the consequence would be a kind of Epicureanism which comes in the form of 'Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die'. Due to the preaching of Swami Vivekananda, our country has already awakened from its deep slumber, and his voice is still ringing in our ears. Our task in the wake of the Swami is to interpret Hinduism to the world, to capture the imagination of educated young men and women and to guide their energies to ends that are socially, politically, and spiritually good. Otherwise fascism, communism, and other isms will capture their imagination and direct their impulses to dangerous ends in a world which is already weary by the second world war.

As regards the origin and development of Hinduism one thing must be made clear. Psycho-analysts are fond of pointing out that religion is the sublimation of primitive lusts and fear. Religion, says Freud, is partly derivable from the *Oedipus complex*, and Prof. Leuba is anxious to conclude that religion is the rationalization of primitive sexual desires. We want to know how religious consciousness, springing from the fears of the savage, could transcend its lowly origin. To judge the root one must understand the fruit. There is something in religious mysticism which has eluded all the psycho-analysts. Here come the Rishis of the Vedas by pointing out that our religion did not originate from the dunghill of human emotions, not from mere reason and arguments, not from accepted truths of today, but from Vedic expressions of self-evident, eternal, and universal Truth. To the Vedic seers any attempt to trace the origin of religion to natural phenomena could not give

the least satisfaction. We can say that they intuited certain forces invisible and incomprehensible to the ordinary intellect of man; thus, the Vedic truths, realized by the direct experiences of sages like Vishvamitra, Bharadvaja, Vamadeva, and others are embodied in their hymns and give a faint idea of what they realized.

Vedanta, the crown of Hindu philosophy, is the quest of final truth; it cannot be at the mercy of psycho-analysts whose accepted conclusions of today may become the exploded fiction of tomorrow. The Reality has been revealed by the Supreme Deity to the Vedic seers who are wedded to truth dispassionately on the basis of their personal experience. Hence our faith in the source of Hinduism, in the Vedas.

Swami Vivekananda points out that there is not one system of Vedanta which does not hold the doctrine that God is within, that divinity resides in all forms. Vedanta is threefold,--dualism, qualified non-dualism, and absolute non-dualism. Every one of the Vedantic systems admits the purity and perfection of the soul. Though intellectual approach to reality admits degrees of realization, the central spiritual theme is the same everywhere. Vedanta, while admitting the evolutionary principle of the projection of the physical universe, body, mind, and sense-organs, avers that all the external phenomena are superimpositions on the Self; the Self which is unborn, eternal, and pure, owing to the mistaken identity with the non-Self suffers and enjoys the ephemeral fruits; the *atman* forgets its blissful nature and imagines itself as if bound and subject to misery. Knowledge of one's own nature and non-identification with matter is freedom. Release is not something to be newly achieved but realization of what is already there.

What is the conception of God in the Vedantin's scheme of thought? Like the scientists and philosophers of the West, there is no need for any Hindu to rationalize his conception of God according to modern needs. The Vedantin's God is sexless, indicated by the neutral term 'Brahman'. It is personal when associated with certain relations and attributes, and impersonal when conceived as devoid of human values. The One and the Many are the same Brahman, perceived differently and at diverse times by

the human mind. To conceive of Brahman as the source of all creation is not to raise the insoluble problems associated with an imperfect Being who has taken the responsibility of deluding his creatures. For, unlike the Christian conception of the Deity It does not safely sit in the skies, keeping a dossier of each individual for purposes of espionage and vengeance. It is within, animating the universe, and without, transcending everything. It is non-different from the self of all and at the same time It is neither *jagat* nor the *jīva*. Hence there does not arise the defect of associating the Eternal and the Immutable with a world that is in a constant state of flux and hence imperfect. The Divine is aware of the aspiration and movement of Life towards It; otherwise the illumination of mystics in the unbroken joy of clear meditation would be meaningless. We cannot set aside the unanimous testimony of saints and mystics as idle babbling of half-wits. The communion with the Divine is the highest acme of religious consciousness which is not only a subjective feeling but also an awareness of an object which edifies and exalts the aspirant.

It is quite probable that India lags behind other nations in the development of science and other secular subjects. But no religion is yet as fully developed as Hinduism which culminates as the highest expression of the human spirit. The Vedantic consciousness contains an element of intuition, an intuition which transfigures the universe as a whole. This intuition involves the idea that the universe is no longer a fleeting bubble, but a reflexion of the Supreme Spirit which is at once the source and the sum of all values. This attitude evokes adoration and worship, because it is realized that everything is a mode or expression of the Reality, however distorted may be the vision to the non-enlightened. The future of Hinduism is one in which the highest values of the spirit will be broadcast while modern creeds and dogmas from the West are inspiring men with an inordinate craving for wealth, power, and other primitive needs. Hinduism of

the future will emphasize its two distinctive aspects, namely, strength and renunciation, in a world infested with the bacteria of weakness and attachment. Even a cursory glance of the basic scriptures of Hinduism will convince anyone that strength is the watchword of the Vedanta. If Hinduism preaches humility, love, kindness, unselfishness, and censures vices of pride and selfishness, it should not be assumed that the religion of the Vedanta is extolling the virtues of a slave. For, Hinduism glorifies the humility of the great, the meekness of the strong, the unselfishness of the rich and the mercy of one who has the power to strike the wicked; but it never justifies the qualities of a slave who cannot rise above his servitude and weakness.

As regards the second aspect of Hinduism, viz renunciation, Swami Vivekananda says that India has survived by *tyāga* alone while other nations springing up from nothingness, making vicious play of their uncontrolled desires for sense-life for a few days, have grown and decayed like mushrooms almost every century. So the Vedantic religion of the Hindu stands on the bedrock of renunciation, annihilating the very idea of cold cruel competition and inordinate craving which have brought untold miseries to the individual and collective life of humanity.

Man is still clogged by the heritage of antiquated orthodoxies and superstitions, and cannot, therefore, emancipate himself from those vestigial relics which create in him false needs. In his moments of weakness and spiritual loneliness, he is carried away on an aimless journey with false hopes. It is from such an impasse that Vedantic Hinduism can restore us. And in the mystical intuition that comes, we perceive as the goal of a journey's end the One which appears as Many, the Impersonal which becomes Personal, the infinite glory of the Soul of man, and finally the knowledge of the relation between God and man, which, transcending the finite range of time, space, and causation, loses itself in the divine mystery.

# THE PHILOSOPHY OF DEVOTION IN THE BHAGAVADGITA

BY PROF. S. N. L. SHRIVASTAVA, M.A.

The twelfth chapter of the Bhagavadgita is one on Bhakti-Yoga, the path of devotion; and herein we find within the short compass of twenty verses all the essentials of Sri Krishna's philosophy of devotion. Everything said here is from the standpoint and for the benefit of the aspirant after devotion. The whole discourse of the present chapter, as of the entire Bhagavadgita for the matter of that, has been given from the practical view-point, the view-point of the *siddhaka*, and not from the view-point of settling questions of theoretical or metaphysical importance only. We shall consider Sri Krishna's exposition of the *bhakti-marga* under three heads : (1) the object of devotion, (2) the methods of devotion, and (3) the marks of the devotee.

## *The Object of Devotion*

After having shown his *vishva-roopa*, his cosmic form in manifestation to Arjuna, Sri Krishna thus explained to him the way of attaining the vision : 'By one-pointed devotion am I able to be thus known and seen in essence, and to be entered into, O Parantapa !' (XI.54). The path of devotion commends itself to Arjuna and he becomes earnest about attaining the vision of God through devotion. But he finds himself at pains in making a choice between the Formless, Unmanifest, and Impersonal (*avyakta, akshara*) aspect of Godhead about which he had heard from Sri Krishna, and the Manifest Personal Form whose vision had been bestowed on him. Which of these has to be made the object of devotion ? Arjuna puts the question to Sri Krishna : 'Between those who, ever harmonized, worship Thee and those who are devoted to the Imperishable and the Unmanifest, whom dost thou consider wiser in Yoga ?' (XII.1). Behind the cosmic splendours and immensities, behind the variegated manifestations, informing them without being in them, supporting them without itself resting in them, is the ever Unmanifest (*avyakta-moorti*) Supreme Spirit, the rootless Root of the universe. It contains all things and yet remains untouched by them,

even as the expansive space remains unaffected by the air moving everywhere within it. (IX. 4-6). Such is the grandeur and sublimity of the Unmanifest about which Arjuna had learnt even before his vision of the Manifest Divine. The question, therefore, cannot fail to arise in his mind : Should our devotion go to the Unmanifest God or the manifest God ? Should we worship God 'without form' or God 'with form' ? Which is the proper Object of devotion, the Impersonal God or the Personal God ? This is a perennial question of the human heart. There have always been men who have thought it derogatory to God to conceive of Him with some 'form' in so far as such a conception is belittling His ultimate formlessness. On the other hand, the devotee's heart has always demanded a God with form and it is the testimony of ages that God has always revealed Himself to his devotees in some form or other.

Now, here is Sri Krishna's answer to the question of Arjuna : 'Best in Yoga are they who having fixed their minds on Me (meaning the Personal Form), endowed with supreme faith and ever harmonized, worship Me. They, on the other hand, who worship the Imperishable, the Unmanifested, Omnipresent, and Unthinkable, the Unchanging, Immutable, Eternal, restraining and subduing their senses, having the same regard for all beings and rejoicing in the welfare of all, also come unto Me. Greater, however, is the hardship of those whose minds are set on the Unmanifest; difficult, indeed, it is for the embodied to reach the realm of the Unmanifest Godhead.' (XII.1-5).

Sri Krishna's answer to the question of Arjuna is clear and decisive. Both pathways are equally valid and lead to the same goal; but the manifest God, 'God with form' is recommended as better suited to the demands of the devotee's heart (whatever be the position of philosophy or metaphysics) for the simple reason that the 'embodied' cannot outsoar the conception of an embodied God. 'So long as you are a man in this world of

man, your God is human, your ideas human, and your religion 'human' said Swami Vivekananda. What Sri Krishna means to say is that devotion to impersonal God, though not impossible, is a more arduous affair for the embodied. In the nature of things, 'God with the embodied form' offers the line of least resistance to the devotee in his path of devotion. They are wiser in the practice of Bhakti-Yoga who have from the outset realized the inexpugnable necessity of God with form for success in the path of devotion.

### *The Methods of Bhakti*

After having settled the question about the form of the object of devotion, which obviously is a matter of prime consideration, Sri Krishna proceeds to speak on the methods or ways of *bhakti*. The best or ideal form of *bhakti*, as described in verses 6 and 8, is the spontaneous and unwavering meditation on God, with all one's heart and soul, ever attached to Him and performing all actions for His sake. Such unreserved and unwavering devotion is responded to and reciprocated by the Lord Himself who takes upon Himself the responsibility of the redemption of His devotee from the world of death and sorrow. Such devotees of the first order are those who can practise the Presence of God with ease and spontaneity.

Those, however, who are unable to practise the Presence of God, who are unable to fix their minds spontaneously in meditation on Him, should constantly aspire to reach Him. This mental practice of aspiring after the Divine is the second best thing to do when the spiritual practice of meditation on Him is found impossible or difficult. The former will eventually lead to the latter.

If the aspirant finds even this mental practice too difficult for him, there is yet another and easier path open to him. He can engage himself in the performance of God's works (*matkarma*), say, in some form of service of humanity which is God Himself in His myriad forms. For a vast majority of mankind the higher meditative practices are ever so difficult and many who willy-nilly struggle after them often recoil with a sense of utter futility and helplessness. Their lives could be redeemed from total spiritual emptiness if only they betook themselves to performing 'God's actions', actions not for

one's own selfish ends but for the larger ends of human welfare. Everyone could do some disinterested service to others according to his own talents and capacities. This is the only way of spiritual elevation for those to whom the higher quietistic disciplines of Yoga is an impossibility. One of the profoundest teachings of the Gita is to turn *action* which is natural to spiritual advantage and make the active life of man a stepping-stone to the meditative life.

Should even performing actions for God be found impossible, then one last course remains, the easiest of all—and that is the renunciation of the fruits of all actions (*svar-karma-phala-tyāga*). Tranquillity follows immediately the relinquishment of the fruits of all actions. When tranquillity is gained, spiritual practices which were difficult in the beginning become easy to perform. Act, for action is inevitable, but be not attached to the consequences.

### *The Marks of the Devotee*

After explaining the forms of devotion, Sri Krishna passes on to explain the differentiae of the life of a true devotee. Verses 13 to 20 mention the marks of the devotee beloved of God. It is significant to note that devotion, according to the Bhagavadgita, is not mere abandonment to excessive and uncontrolled emotionalism, but a steady and tranquil fixing of the mind on the Lord. *Karma-phala-tyāga* is so highly commended, because, besides being the easiest step in Bhakti-Yoga, it brings peace forthwith to the mind. The devotional spirit is a permanent and a pervasive quality of the devotee's life which expresses itself not only in his attitude towards God but also in his attitude towards his fellow-men. 'He prayeth best who loveth best.' The true devotee of God, says Sri Krishna, is 'He who beareth no ill-will towards anybody, is kind and friendly towards all, is without attachment and egotism, evenly balanced in happiness and sorrow and forgiving. He is the Yogi of subdued self and firm resolve, ever contented, and has his mind and reason dedicated to Me. He is the devotee dear to Me. Him the world disturbs not; nor does he disturb the world. Free he is from the commotions of joy, fear, and anger. Such a devotee I love. He wants nothing from anyone, is unperturbed, pure, and passionless, and renouncing all

undertakings is attached to Me alone. Him I love. He is not elated (by worldly success) nor is he given to hatred; grieves not nor desires. Abandoning both good and evil, he is full of devotion to Me. Verily, he is dear to Me. Alike is he to friend and foe, to respect and disrespect, to the inclemencies of heat and cold, to happiness and to sorrow and unclinging to anything. He takes blame and reproach equally, is silent and content with whatever falls to his lot, is without a habitation, is steady-minded and full of devotion to Me. Such a man is dear to Me. Verily, those who follow this nectarine path

of devotion spoken of by Me, with supreme faith and attachment to Me, are my devotees whom I love beyond all measure.' (XII. 13-20).

Be it remembered, that *bhakti*, according to the Gita, does not consist in sporadic fits of emotional effervescence, but in a life of elemental calm, of 'malice toward none and charity for all', of love illimitable and service ungrudging, and of faith that never loosens its hold on the feet of God. Such a life alone is the high light of *bhakti*. In silence and serenity, in service and humility, we should seek our God.

## THE SHRAUTA DIKSHA

BY PROF. JAGADISHCHANDRA MITRA

The long range of the Brâhmana literature closely following upon the Sambhitâs is beset with the burden of sacrificial details of various types, and generally they presuppose a necessary course of discipline on the part of the intending sacrificer (*Yajamâna*) which is called the *dikshâ* or consecration. It serves as a good analogue, nay, an archetype too, we may incidentally add, of the *Grhya* conceptions of *upanayana* or initiation to some extent.

The word *dikshâ* finds mention singly in the Samhitâs like the *Vâjasaneyi* (IV. ii. V. vi, etc.) and also together with another significant word, *tapas*, ardour, in many places, e.g. *Atharvaveda*, (XIX, 41, 43). The constant association of the *dikshâ* with the Soma sacrifices leads to its personification as the consort of King Soma in the *Gopatha Brâhmana* (II. ii. 9 : सोमस्य राज्ञः पत्नी), while the *Taittiriya Samhitâ* (I.ii. 2) deifies it along with *tapas* and ordains the offering of libations unto them.

The *dikshâ* is a process for making one fit for the sacrifice, generally understood as a Soma sacrifice, and the sacrificer is ushered into a fresh spiritual, or rather, godly, existence. Let us attempt to describe here how this new birth is effected through the various processes subservient to the rite in point.

Of the three major accounts of the consecration as found in the *Taittiriya Samhitâ*

(in its Brâhmana portion), the *Aitareya* and the *Shatapatha Brâhmanas*, the former obviously precedes the latter in each case chronologically, so that we are in a position to trace the evolution in the conception of this ritual device.

The *Taittiriya Samhitâ* (VI. 1 f.) starts with the description of the *prâchina-vamsha*, or the hall having its pole turned towards the east, made especially to suit the requirement of the *dikshâ*. It must be covered over according to this Brâhmana passage. Why? Because man, it is stated, is to imitate what has been done by the gods. Now, as the world of gods lies hidden from the sight of men, this consecration-hall, which is *a priori* to be looked upon as such a world, is also to be hidden from the outsiders' gaze.

The whole rite of the *dikshâ* facilitates, as we have suggested above, the promotion of the sacrificer on to the heaven peopled by the gods; and he is required, as such, to be absolutely pure, pure in spirit and pure in form. He must shave his hair and beard and clip his nails which are all impure. Then 'sipping water' is ordained as water has been acknowledged on all hands to bear a purificatory property besides many others. Thereupon he is to put on a linen garment inasmuch as its presiding deity is Soma, and this fits in well with the consecration previous to a Soma sacrifice. The ideology behind the putting on of a garment

is, as assumed by the Brâhmanas, that all the gods share the different portions of it; and, as such, the constant contact with it keeps the sacrificer conscious of his divine birth and divine nature. The passage of the sacrificer to heaven where he is to be one of its occupants is not yet complete: he must pass through a series of gateways leading to that realm. By now he has been segregated from the earthly existence only. The priests, by way of supplementing, anoint him with butter and purify him with bunches of the *darbha* grass, which is nothing but metamorphosed water, pure and simple, according to the Brâhmanic theologians, both of which have been looked upon as purificatory in character. These processes complete, there is such a peculiar operation as the offering of the *audgrahana* or elevating oblations in accompaniment with certain verses which are conceived of as being potential in this regard. The sacrificer is, in the fitness of things, to be consecrated then with a black antelope skin which has been stated to be the *brahma-varchasa* or spiritual splendour; and it is to be carefully borne in mind that the consecrated man turns to be a Brahmin by *varna* through the procedure of the *dikshâ*. The text in question points to the idea of the new birth in unvarnished terms and compares (or rather, identifies) the consecrated soul with a foetus and discovers in the garment the likeness of a caul. His leaving off the garment as soon as the Soma plants have been bought for the purpose of the sacrifice reminds the Brâhmana author of the actual birth of the consecrated; and it may be passingly observed that this idea of a fresh birth of the sacrificer at the *dikshâ* has been endorsed by the *Panchavimsha Brâhmana* also (X. iii. 10).

After this, the sacrificer is to be offered a broad and triply plaited girdle, which he is to wear in the middle of the body, and also a staff, the significance of both of which will be discussed later on.

The *Aitareya Brâhmana* account (II. iii) is decidedly an improvement over, and extension of, the quasi-biological dissertation of the *Taittiriya Samhitâ-Brâhmana*. It dwells at the outset on some of the embryological facts. The sprinkling of water over the consecrated man is as it were the pouring of the seed and, as such, represents the very beginning of the regeneration, though in a

spiritual sense, of the sacrificer. Thereupon follow the processes of the anointment of him from head to foot, the purification with twenty-one handfuls (*pinjulis*) of *darbha* grass, and the leading to the *prâchina-vamshu* hall which is the spiritual womb of the consecrated. He shall generally be, in accordance with the imagery followed, within the hall for a steady organic growth, and no communication with the outsiders is allowed. He should wear a garment (probably a linen one) and an upper garment made of the black antelope skin as reminiscent of the caul and placenta and should also remain with closed fists—all of which are expected of a foetus. Keeping the fists in such a posture serves a double purpose, namely, the imitation of an embryo as well as of a child just born, and the holding of the sacrifice itself in grip with the whole pantheon connected with it. He gives up the skin and takes the final bath called *ava-bhrita*, a ceremonial custom which is traceable among some other nationalities like the Greek and the Hebrew.<sup>1</sup> At this point the process of the godly birth comes to a completion.

A significant point deserves notice in this connection which has been insisted on by the *Kaushitaki Brâhmana*. It (VII. ii) prohibits the uttering of the name of the consecrated because he is then, to all intents and purposes, an embryo which cannot have a name until it is born. The same Brâhmana (XIII. ii) speaks of the food for one thus born as simply milk, and conceives (XXV. xiii) the speech of such an one as the repetition of the syllable *O* (i.e., *nyunkha*), and his is a stumbling gait (cf. also XXV. viii). These are some of the graphic representations of the new-birth ideas at initiation which may be observed even among the primitive peoples all over the world.<sup>2</sup>

This time we are taking up the *Shatapatha Brâhmana* account (III. i. 1 f.) which represents one of the latest phases of development in this particular ritualistic conception, and we may reasonably expect to find some newer accretions thereto.

The very beginning of the section tends to enlighten us on the point why the pole of

<sup>1</sup> See Hubert and Mauss, *Année Sociol.*, II. 86 f.

<sup>2</sup> W. S. Routledge and K. Routledge, *With a Prehistoric People, the Akikuyu of Br. E. Africa*; Frazer, *Belief in Immortality*, vol. I, p. 250; Kohl, *Kitschi-Gami*, etc., etc.

the *prâchîna-vamsha* hall should be easterly pointed. It states as a ritualistic justification that the eastern direction belongs to the gods (III. i. 1. 2; also III. i. 1. 7), and, as such, it is proper that the hall should be constructed in that fashion. There is nothing here, however, as regards the length and breadth of the hall; but this we may gather from the commentary of the *Kâtyâyana Shrauta Sutra* (VII. i. 19 f.), a later source of information, in the opinion of which it requires to be twenty cubits long and ten cubits broad. As for the covering up of the hall completely, our Brâhmana opines almost in the same strain with the *Taittiriya Samhitâ* (see above) that as the consecrated man partakes of the nature of the heavenly host and as the gods in their turn remain concealed from the mortal sight, it should be furnished with an enclosure on all sides. He is generally permitted to hold communication only with a member of the three higher castes who are eligible for sacrifice unto the gods, as they have been conceived of being born after them. Now, he must shave his hair and beard and cut off his nails in order to be pure; for the Brâhmana argues, in its own way, that the part of the body where water fails to penetrate is to be viewed as unclean, and the hair, beard, and nails are such matters. It may as such be observed from the Brâhmanic angle of vision that the rite of tonsure (*chaula*) is connected with the rite of *dikshâ*, as is the case with that of *upanayana*. The Brâhmana ordains by way of concession that he may take any food according to his inclination prior to the ceremonial shaving. This refers, of course, to the pre-*dikshâ* period which has got affinity with the *Grihya* conception of the pre-*upanayana* stage of life of the boy when he may take anything he likes, wander at his sweet will, and talk according to his inner promptings.

As soon as he is consecrated, it is enjoined by the Brâhmanas that he should live on milk only, which is the food *par excellence* for the consecrated. A process of purification is that he is required then to take a ritualistic bath and afterwards he wears a lineu garment, the different parts of which are presided over by the gods Agni, Vâyu, and so on.<sup>3</sup> One of the reasons here

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Taitt. Sam.*, VI. i. 1 which, however, is not identical with the *Shatapatha* passage in point.

advanced for the wearing is the same as the *Taittiriya Samhitâ* supplies, namely, that the consecrated soul will be thus in a position to enjoy an uninterrupted contact and communion with all the gods concerned. It states another reason: the garment is in reality his own skin, the putting on of which is tantamount to his being endowed with his complete form. This reminds us of a piece of legend which states that the skin of the cow originally belonged to man. The latter's skin was stripped off and was given to the former and a sore was thereby caused in the man's person, which is healed up by anointing (*Shat. Brâh.*, III. i. 3. 7 f.). This Brâhmana insists on the consecrated man's being properly clothed, for as a result of failing in this he turns to be of an imperfect constitution, which is undesirable. This queer exhortation is certainly reminiscent of the Iranian scriptural ordinance which states that to move improperly clothed entails a sin of no mean weight called *kushâd dubârishnih* and the Evil Spirits in the persons of Druj, Indar, and the like rejoice at the sight of such a refractory soul (cf. *Mainog*, II. 35; *Arta Virâf*, XXV. 6; *Patet*, 10).

The garment requires to be in the first alternative a new one (*a-hata*), for it signifies undiminished vigour. The Brâhmana makes provision, somewhat reluctantly, for an already washed cloth, but it should be borne in mind, says the Brâhmana, that it must not have been washed by a washerman. The relevant *mantras* are recited by him while putting on the garment, which is aptly designated as the 'covering of consecration and penance'.

This done, the priest *adhvaryu* leads him into the consecration hall and performs the pertinent rites for him such as anointing, applying collyrium to the eyes (*Shat. Brâh.*, III. i. 3. 15; cf. *Taitt. Sam.*, VI. i. 1. 5), and purifying by means of the *darbha* grass. He is to move between the two fires, viz *âhavaniya* and *gârhapatiya*, in imitation of a foetus moving inside the womb. These are some of the ideas connected with the stages

The portions of the garment thought of as presided over by the different gods according to the *Taittiriya* and the *Shatapatha* vary. The *Taitt. Brâhmana* in clear terms states that the garment belongs to all the gods: सर्वदेवता वासः (I. iii. 7).

of the new birth of the sacrificer as we have already remarked heretofore.

As in the *Taittiriya*, the *audgrabbhuna* (elevatory) offering with the requisite formulas has been dealt with in this Brâhmana in some detail. The Brâhmana (III. i. 4. 1) maintains that all the *mantras* connected with the rite of consecration may be generally viewed upon as uplifting in character inasmuch as all of them *en bloc* tend to *lift up* the consecrated man to the world of the gods. This act of lifting up the man has been furnished with a spiritual *motif* in the Brâmanic sacerdotalism.

The next step in the *dikshâ* ceremony is the girding of the consecrated, an affair which admits of very much complexity in its detail. Among the *Samhitâ* sources, the famous *mukhalâ* hymn of the *Atharvaveda* happens to be first to deal with the attributes and efficacies of the girdle. The *Taittiriya Samhitâ* (vi. iii. 10) indulges in meticulous discussions touching the relevant problems, and the *Shatapatha Brâhmana*, in particular, continues the line of thought as promulgated by the *Taittiriya*, which explains why the girdle should be worn in the middle. In an *artha-vâda* manner, which is peculiar to the stock of the Brâhmana treatises, it has been advocated here that strength and vigour are preserved in the middle as an effect of wearing the girdle, which is made of *shara* grass, in that place. Moreover, the navel is the seat of breath. Another favourable argument has been thus advanced: as the navel is located midway between the upper (or pure) and the lower (or impure) parts of the body, the discriminating faculty of the man grows up as a result of so wearing.<sup>4</sup> As for the question why the girdle should be three-stranded, the *Taittiriya* passage answers that a man should put his breath, which is three-fold, intact in the middle. The why of its being broad is that the strands are distinguishable from one another when they are so made.

The *Shatapatha* also imagines the girdle, which should be hempen according to it, as an indubitable source of strength (III. ii. 1. 10), and opines that it is worn in the middle for attaining this end. It puts forth an argument in support of its threefold form: as

<sup>4</sup> Cf. for the prescription of wearing the girdle in the middle, the *Bodhâyana Shrauta Sutra* (XX. ii. 6).

food and cattle may be arranged under three heads, and as the father, the mother, and the issue of their union form into a trio, it is proper that it should be only threefold. It is palpable that, although at the first sight the second alternative seems simply to be a fantastic fabrication of imagination, there is something in it worthy of attention. We have noted that the ceremony in point facilitates the spiritual regeneration of the sacrificer, and from this point of view the Brâhmana speculation in point may stand justified.<sup>5</sup>

Now, it should be interlaced with the *munja* grass as the latter has the power to drive away the evil spirits as it is potential like the thunderbolt, and plaited in a special manner befitting the sacrificial need. While girding himself, he addresses it as the strength of the Angirasas, thus recalling to the mind the Brâhmana legend concerning the point. Thereupon the end of his under-garment is tied up with a formula. The next thing he has got to do is to cover his head, preferably with another piece of cloth (*ushnisha*), according to the same source of information referred to above, namely, the commentary on the *Kâtyâyana Shrauta Sutra*, VII. iii. 28. This head-dress symbolizes his embryonic stage of existence.

The act of handing over a staff to the consecrated has much interest in it. The *Taittiriya Samhitâ* (VI. i. 4) records a mythic account which runs on as follows: once it came to such a pass that *Vâk* (the goddess Speech) turned away from the gods being disinclined to serve for the cause of the sacrifice and concealed herself in the trees (cf. *Kâthaka Samhitâ*, XXIII. iv. 6; *Maitrâyani Samhitâ*, III. vi. 8-10, etc.). Now, the trees in question may be tacitly assumed to be the sacrificial ones. The staff, which has been specially mentioned here as being of the *udumbara* wood prepared from those trees, is offered unto the consecrated with a view to winning for himself the lost

<sup>5</sup> Be it noted that the Brâhmana mode of argument is such that it will consider the slightest point of contact and then extend its argument on that little bit of substratum. At places the tenor of the reasoning becomes patent to even a casual observer, and at some places the extraction of the real import presupposes a very careful and laboured scrutinization. This mannerism of the Brâhmana has been properly called the *bhâkta* usage.

*Vâk* as well as strength as an additional possession as signified by the *udumbara*.

The *Shatapatha* (III. ii. 1. 32 f.), on the other hand, characterizes the staff of the consecrated as the thunderbolt, and this is efficacious as it repels away the malicious spirits. In this context we may look up to the Avestic word *vazra* denoting the staff which also has got the same purport in view. By a queer stretch of imagination the Brahmana states that the staff is to reach the height of the mouth because power is discernible and available thus far. It also ordains the *udumbara* staff for the possession of food and strength both of which are represented by the tree. In course of a *mantra*, which is recited while erecting the *udumbara* post, it is appealed to for protection from all possible harms till the whole procedure of the sacrifice is completed. Here also we find a good significance of holding the staff as it is conceived to be playing the role of a protective agency.<sup>6</sup>

Silence is observed by the consecrated; and as sacrifice has been identified with speech, speechlessness during the performance of the rite implies the winning over of the sacrifice. The *Shatapatha* (III. ii. 2. 6) categorically withholds its approval from the custom of breaking silence which runs counter to the principle of the sacrificial cult.

The Brahmana deals with the incidental (*avântara*) *dikshâ* basing it on the pattern of the *diksha majora*, which, along with some minor details of the *dikshâ* itself, we may leave out here for brevity's sake.

The study of the rite of consecration as in the above-stated accounts reveals, in short, that it is purificatory like the *barashnum* ceremony of the Zoroastrians, that it paves the way to the sacrificer's ideally passing into the heavenly world after he has been spiritually regenerated and that the similitude of a foetus has been carried far in this context, and that the whole paraphernalia when anatomized is found to symbolize this or that aspect or attribute connected with

the new-birth idea. In a word, what is aimed at throughout the procedure of the *dikshâ*, is to confer sacrificial fitness on the intending sacrificer who turns into a Brahmin for the time being. We find an announcement couched in an unequivocal language to the effect that the two other castes are also to be looked upon as the highest caste through the sacrifice.<sup>7</sup>

A *Taittiriya* passage (III. i. 1) holds Agni to be the deity of the consecrated because of the palpable notion of Agni's being the god *par excellence* of the Brahmin caste as well as of the other two castes during consecration, meaning thereby their Brahminization *ipso facto* at least for the period of the performance of the ritual in question. Also there is a hint at the identification of the two, the consecrated man and Agni, as the former attains godhood through the rite (cf. *Taitt. Sam.*, I. ii. 11).

The notion of this type of re-birth can be traced, not at all dimly, in the *Rigveda* itself (VII. xxxiii. 13), and it has been transmitted from a very old epoch of human civilization. That this conception of the new birth is attended with an ethical principle also, is sufficiently corroborated by a *mantra* portion of the *Taittiriya Samhitâ*, (namely, I. ii. 10), which is a prayer formula for the acquisition of truth, as also by the tradition of the *Rigveda Brâhmaṇas*—the *Āitareya* and the *Kaushitaki*. The *Āitareya* (I. vi) lays down the emphatic injunction that the consecrated must speak the truth; for it thinks, truth in all its possible forms is the form of the *dikshâ*. The *Kaushitaki* (VII. iii) refers to the authoritative statement that the *dikshâ* is an exclusive right of the truth-speaking man. If we push a little this vein of the conception of re-birth, we come across some *Jaiminiya-Upanishad-Brâhmaṇa* passages (III. ii. 8 f., and III. iii. 1 f.) wherein is found a logical extension of the idea in that it postulates three births and correspondingly three deaths.<sup>8</sup> The three births relate to the father, the mother, and the sacrifice. Before a man is re-born at the ceremony of *upanayana*, it may be reasonably argued that he must die. Thereupon, as he acquires fitness for sacrificial performances, he is required to undergo a course of ceremony called the *dikshâ* at which he is said to be

<sup>6</sup> Cf. also the *Grihyas*, viz. *Gobhila*, III. i. 14, 27; *Ashvalâyana*, III. viii. 20; *Pâraskara*, II. vi. 31, etc. The prescription is found in the *Taitt. Sam.*, VI. i. 4. 2 and in the *Ashvalâyana Shrauta*, III. i. 20, *inter alia*, that a minor priest called the *maitrâvaraṇa* should stand with his staff inclined forward as though in a posture of striking the evil spirits. The magic element attending the use of the staff in rituals, comes to the foreground in many cases.

<sup>7</sup> *Taitt. Sam.*, VI. i. 4; compare *Shat. Brah.*, III. ii. 1. 39 40; XIII. iv. 1. 3.

<sup>8</sup> श्रीं वे पुरुषो ज्ञियते त्रि जायते —III. iii. 1.

born as a deity and homogeneity of species is thus effected, and it is his real birth (III. iii. 4). This time also he is conceived of as having given up his life without which act he cannot, on the score of propriety of judgement, be taken as a reborn soul. Thus at the *dikshâ* he is stated by this Brâhmana to have suffered his second death. In fact, the whole thing revolves round the idea that birth presupposes death in all cases. It carries this allegory to a great detail and compares the consecrated man with a dead one from many points of view and then concludes : यत्त्वा वाचेष तदा रूपमवत्ति—His form then (i.e., at the *dikshâ*) becomes one of the dead as it were.' And it is thus not to be wondered at that the conception of the funeral rites partakes of the nature of initiation in some aspects, since the departed soul is thereby introduced into some unseen and inscrutable realm of existence.

The reading of the new-birth idea in the *dikshâ* performance, as we have sketched above, is not without its rival theories. Hillebrandt, relying on the notion that the word *dikshâ* is derivationally connected with the root *dah*, to burn, postulates that it implies 'voluntary death by fire'; but his view lacks in historical support (*Ved. Myth.*, I. 482; III. 354 f.). 'The production of religious ecstasy' might have been also an old idea, related to the *dikshâ* which is paralleled by the cult of Bacchus as prevalent in the old-day Greece.<sup>9</sup> But the most obvious significance of the rite in point has been dwelt on throughout this sketch; and this is the Brâhmanic import, though there might have been some older motive-springs as pointed to above.

<sup>9</sup> Vide *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, Harvard Oriental Series, Vol. XXXI, pp. 300 f. where Keith does not fail to see also the new-birth idea in the *dikshâ*.

## THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

By A. DOROTHY BARRS

### 1. What is My Chief Aim in Life?

When I was young I often felt discontented as I had not then found my goal. Owing to family misfortunes I left school at an early age, and so was ill-equipped to face life's difficulties. Some of the most impressionable years were spent in housework, cooking and caring for children. At twenty I attracted the attention of a worker in the Women's Suffrage Movement and was invited to be an organizer. Feeling very frightened and forlorn, I set out for the first time alone into the big world, to do what I then thought was a big piece of work; to help to make women politically and socially equal with men. From now on my mind began to awaken and I took every opportunity that came to me for development.

One line of thought after another was presented to me in political, industrial, social, and religious activity. I soon found that one's aim in life changed as one obtained further knowledge and enlightenment. I accepted many unorthodox ideas. I joined numerous organizations. In the early days politics chiefly interested me. I was born of

orthodox parents and so was brought up to accept their conservative outlook and to attend church and Sunday school. It was to the left wing in politics that I chiefly gave my services.

During the last war I came in touch with a Spiritual Movement which greatly inspired me. From the study of its literature I found many new ideas, and ideals for a better way of life slowly but surely awakened within me.

From the time I realized how little I knew and how much there was to know. My chief aim was to be enlightened; but side by side with this was the strong desire for material pleasure. I understood more and more intellectually, the way to achieve spiritual understanding, but for many years it remained at the intellectual level. I could not put my whole thought and attention upon meditation and the life of service because I had not then become satiated with material enjoyment. I was full of energy and life and was so busy doing things that I had no time for the silence.

One organization after another was dis-

carded, the search for truth was begun in earnest. Occasionally a new group would compel my attention. I would study with its members for a year or so and drift away once more. I had not yet found what I was seeking.

I do not think I am different from many thousands of others when I say that it was through a particularly dark patch during the present war, that I became aware of the chief aim in my life. The dawning of this realization may have been sudden, but the awareness itself resulted from a slow, steady growth within, from years of experience and of probing into life's problems. Through meditation I found I could reach some hidden power greater than my conscious mind—a power that helped me definitely to get through difficulties with ease. I discovered, too, that I was able to understand the problems of life and its purpose with greater clarity. My goal became crystal clear. I determined to know what constituted that power. Was it outside myself, was it part of my mind, if so what part? All kinds of questions and doubts arose, which were all born of the questing, conscious mind. From my studies I saw that mind was threefold: sub-conscious, conscious and super-conscious. The first is stored memories of every experience that has occurred, the second is what the brain remembers of experiences, the third is the higher mentality, composed of abstract thought and spiritual concepts.

So, if one thinks seriously and keeps the word 'progress' always in the brain-consciousness, one's aim in life is constantly changing. Each step upon life's pathway brings new experiences, these give one a wider vision of the whence, how and whither of our journey, and afford one a more intelligent view of the purpose of life. The soul begins to come into greater harmony with the conscious mind, and the seeker is ever finding new adventures bringing a clearer conception of this upward and mystical path. The frustration and limitation of early days give place to anticipation and achievement, when the goal of at-one-ment with the spiritual self within is realized. Therefore has the chief aim in life become for me 'to know myself and the powers latent in man'.

## 2. *These Latent Powers*

The mind of man is awakening from its long sleep. No longer are we content to

dwell in the past, or to live only for the present. Constantly we are asking ourselves 'What of the Future?' What are the methods which man might use in his quest in probing the mysteries of the unknown years ahead? The one who has developed the logic and reasoning power of concrete thought will seek along known scientific lines. He will observe facts, and from these facts he will postulate a hypothesis. Having seen his theories materialize, he will deduce by means of reason and logic that the world is governed by certain specified laws, and as he observes more and more those laws at work he will construct a plan of life. Furthermore, he will continue his investigation beyond the physical plane, having come to the conclusion that there are other worlds to study and conquer. He will find that the form through which life manifests in each world within this planetary scheme of evolution, now under discussion, is built up on the density of the atom, which is the basic substance of all forms of every plane of existence. The life permeating these worlds can function only through a body made up of atoms being of the density of matter to which these worlds vibrate. The more dense the matter the slower the rate of vibration of everything contained within its orbit. Hence the only point of difference in all planes of existence is the rate of vibration or the density of its atom.

In the world there have been and are scientists who have reached the limitations of the physical atom and have penetrated a more subtle grade of matter which they call etheric. We are realizing that it is but a step between the physicist and the metaphysician. The physicists deal with the physical atom and observed phenomena from which they deduce facts; they accept as fact only that which is observed through the senses. The metaphysicians deal with lesser known phenomena observed by the mind, and discuss subjects beyond the range of ordinary knowledge and perceive phenomena through senses beyond the five in normal use. They postulate a continuous progress through the law of evolution, with the development of organs for contacting the finer degrees of matter and finer rates of vibration of other planes of existence. The latter type of scientist calls these planes or worlds the etheric, the astral,

and the mental. Spirit and matter exist on all planes but with different rates of vibration because the law of opposites operates wherever life is expressed through form. At the present time many more persons are developing the power within themselves whereby they can investigate these facts advanced by thinkers such as Jeans, Eddington, Lodge, Crooks and others.

It is true that the development of senses other than the five we are accustomed to use lends itself to fraud and self-delusion unless care and thought are exercised in our use of them. There are many credulous people who will accept everything given them if it purports to come from a world other than the material one in which the majority function. This unscientific attitude on the part of some is no reason why all investigation on these lines should be ignored or treated with contempt.

If all observed phenomena of life and form are the result of a law of continuous progress—which law men call evolution—then mind is also part of this evolving process. There can be no limit to what the mind can achieve and the heights to which humanity can rise during its course of evolutionary progress as the ages roll on.

Mankind in the mass, it has been said, has now reached the stage of adolescence in its journey towards perfection. This means that we have developed the physical body to some extent but not to its full maturity; that the emotions are awake but not fully controlled; that the mind is able to function but in a very limited degree compared with the possibilities of the future; and that

whereas the spiritual consciousness is but embryonic for some of us, for others it begins to stir in its age-long sleep, and for a few enlightened souls it has become aware of the grandeur and beauty of life.

The only safe way for the individual to unfold the gifts of the spirit, which will enable him or her to look into the future as well as to scan the pages of the life history of humanity, is by slow development until spiritual awareness has been attained. This means hard and persistent effort in the laboratory of one's own mind and heart, through meditation and the religious way of life. When thought, emotion, desire, and action are controlled by the will and the soul can take command instead of the personality, the latter becomes blended with the spirit within and then only can it be said 'I am the captain of my soul'.

Through observation and analogy, and the understanding of and living in accordance with spiritual laws—which scientists designate natural law—man can awaken special powers within himself. This advance in evolution will enable him to function consciously in worlds other than the material and to respond to finer rates of vibration. These powers are known as clairvoyance, clairaudience, spiritual perception and inspiration. It is not the purpose of this article to discuss fully these gifts which can be psychic and spiritual, but I would point out that at the present stage of human development it is wiser to awaken the spiritual rather than the psychic powers, and to remember the injunction 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven and all other things shall be added unto you'.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

Swami Atulananda's article gives a concise but vivid account of *Swami Vivekananda in the West*. In *The Future of Hinduism*, Swami Adidevananda discusses the principles we have to follow in order to keep up our distinct individuality. Prof. Shrivastava gives a brief but brilliant exposition of *The Philosophy of Devotion in the Bhagavadgita*. Prof. Jagdishchandra Mitra has given a learned

account of *The Shrauta Diksha. The Spiritual Life* is an account of the first stirrings of the true religious spirit that seems to be taking place in even the ordinary man and woman in the West.

### RE-ORGANIZATION OF HINDU SOCIETY

A fervent call to all classes of Hindus to close up their ranks and work together, with

determination and faith, for the resuscitation of their social life was made by Dr. Shyamaprasad Mookherji, addressing the annual session of the Hindu Mahasabha. He boldly pointed out certain evils that beset our social and national life and for which Hindus themselves are responsible. It was no exaggeration when he observed,

It is no use our merely blaming the British or a section of aggressive Muslim party for attacking our rights or obstructing the liberty of our country. We have also to ask ourselves whether we, on our part, have contributed the best that we can for building up a complete national life, consistent with the highest ideals of Hinduism. Let it not be forgotten that it is our own weakness, our narrowness, our petty selfishness which strengthen our enemy; and it is our paramount duty to set our own house in order.

Some persons attribute the present deplorable state of Hindu society to purely extraneous causes, political and communal. But in these few words, the well-known Hindu leader sums up the problems of the Hindus today. There are other factors which impede the progress of the social and economic life of the Hindus. But these need not be disproportionately overstated, and the importance of our own duty minimized. Party spirit and want of organization, meaningless discussions and quarrels over little details—these have divided the Hindus and weakened Hindu society. There is a marked disparity between theory and practice, and self-sacrificing men and women are becoming fewer in number. In addition to these there are caste prejudices and the practice of untouchability.

Society is not restricted to the high caste educated upper classes. There are the masses who, though poor and uneducated, form the majority and are the mainstay of the social structure. Any scheme of social reconstruction will have to actively concern itself with the amelioration of the condition of the masses on whose labour and co-operation society depends. Untouchability, and the restriction in accepting converts back into Hindu society have done great harm to Hindu solidarity. These problems were not actively taken up so long by influential leaders who were pre-occupied more with political activities. As a consequence, more Hindus from the lower classes are being persuaded by their reactionary leaders to renounce Hinduism. We are glad to find

that Dr. Mookherji has unequivocally declared that the foremost social programme of the Hindus should be the removal of untouchability, in whatever form it may be found. He has rightly pointed out that no society can exist if it deliberately neglects particular sections and relegates them to positions of inferiority; hence, he said

Our first and foremost social programme must be the complete removal of untouchability and to regard every Hindu as enjoying equal social status....

And analysing the causes and consequences of this social evil, he continued,

But have we ever asked ourselves why it is that such a huge number of people left the Hindu faith and took to another religion? I shall exclude those who were forced to do so by the fear of sword, but surely not an inconsiderable number of our brethren also left because of the inequities and hardships that confronted them in their own society. Untrue to our highest traditions, we occupied ourselves with outward forms and practices and forgot the absorbing capacity of our own religion. This rigidity destroyed our strength and solidarity and contributed to our downfall. Not only must we widen our base but also unhesitatingly take back all who are prepared to return to our fold.

His sound and timely advice to Hindus was to reorganize society on the basis of equal rights to education, congregational worship, and other necessities of life for all irrespective of caste distinctions. Appealing for unity amongst all ranks, he strongly urged the Hindus to cultivate the true religious outlook, and reassert the principle of spiritual equality in the practical spheres of activity.

Let us frankly recognize that, if we are today in a confused and morbid condition, it is because we have not been socially loyal to our own religion which requires us to look upon every individual as a child of God.

Unity of purpose and readiness to sacrifice for the common weal are the source of strength of a well-knit social body. Resurgent Hindu society should seek to achieve energy and solidarity through co-ordination of will power and enhancement of efficiency of individual elements. As a healthy human body can withstand the attack of morbid bacilli, even so a well-organized social frame, rebuilt on a spiritual foundation and free from internal weakness or disorder, will be able to gather immense power of resistance to alien onslaught, and remain unconquerable.

### THE PURPOSE OF PHILOSOPHY

That the dominant note of Indian philosophy today as of old is the synthesis of the theoretical and the practical sides of human nature was the theme of the presidential address by Prof. P. N. Srinivasachari to the Indian Philosophical Congress, reproduced in a recent number of the *Philosophical Quarterly*. He reiterated the fact that philosophy in India was not divorced from life, but permeated every phase of human thought and action, thus freeing men from superstition and fanaticism. Indian philosophy is

both speculative and spiritual, and is truly called a *darshana*. It seeks to re-interpret the philosophic heritage of India in terms of the Western methods of scientific and philosophic criticism, and thus makes its own specific contribution to philosophy as a whole.

Western science and Indian philosophy are coming closer to discover their common features and appreciate each other's standpoint. The synthetic and rational basis of Indian philosophy has served to create a better understanding between the thinkers of the East and West by demonstrating that the political ideals of the West can be spiritualized.

Modern civilization, with its immense material wealth and power, has yet failed to make man master of his passions. Brutal instincts hold their sway, and the higher values of life are neglected. The learned Professor diagnoses the malady of present-day civilization and remarks:

The social philosophy of today reveals the tragic fact that culture and civilization are on the very verge of collapse owing to the decadence of faith in the moral values of life and the dignity of per-

sonality. . . . Modern life suffers from racialism in social life, sectional thinking in science, rationalism in politics, and fanaticism in religion.

What is the remedy? The solution lies in cultivating the philosophical outlook

that will combine the seriousness of the thinker with the social virtues of the man of action.

Disarmament and what is said to be a 'complete victory' over the forces of evil are found to be ineffective while man's propensity to self-aggrandizement remains uneliminated, and so long as he is not spiritually awakened. This awakening can come from a philosophy of life which will urge him to strive for the permanent values and lead him on to something more than mere satisfaction of the senses.

He has briefly stated the ethical and religious foundations of Vedanta philosophy, thus refuting the charge that Indian philosophy is world-negating and encourages an attitude of indifference to the sufferings of others. In fact, the aim of philosophy is not to make man give up happiness but to let him know what true and eternal happiness is. The distinction between religion and philosophy is fast disappearing, yielding place to the philosophy of religion. Hinduism, unlike Western thought, has not exaggerated such distinction. The modern philosophy of religion, he says,

seeks to avoid the evils of dogmatism and fanaticism characteristic of institutional religion on the one hand, or agnosticism or free thought on the other by insisting on the authority of personal experience.

Religion without philosophy may result in a mass of superstition, and philosophy without the intuitive experience of religion may tend to become mere intellectual speculation.

### REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**INDIA AND CHINA.** By S. RADHAKRISHNAN. Published by Hind Kitabs, 267, Hornby Road, Bombay. Pp. 168. Price Rs. 6.

At the invitation of the Chinese Government Sir S. Radhakrishnan visited China in May 1944 and delivered some illuminating lectures in and around Chungking on the religion and culture of China and Indo-Chinese cultural relations. This book is based on notes of these lectures. Most of us in India know more about the Western civilization than about the Chinese, though there

is much in common between India and China. It was most appropriate that a worthy scholar and well-known philosopher of our country, like Sir Radhakrishnan was invited to visit China as India's cultural ambassador in order to promote mutual understanding and friendly co-operation between the two countries. In these lectures Dr. Radhakrishnan spoke to the Chinese on their past greatness and achievements in the field of religion and education; and he has made it clear to them—and to the world—that whatever politi-

cal vicissitudes the two countries may have passed through, India and China have a common spiritual background. 'Our countries have been linked together from before the Christian era in matters of learning and culture. . . . They have similar ideals of human life and fellowship.' In his 'Introduction' to these lectures, Dr. Radhakrishnan acquaints the readers with the general life of the Chinese people, their educational institutions, their religious practices, and political ideologies.

The lectures appear under seven different headings. The first is 'China and India'. The second is devoted to a discussion of the 'Chinese ideals of education'. The principles of education introduced by Confucius have inspired the Chinese youth to strive to develop such human qualities as humility, sincerity, good manners, and tolerance for neighbours. Teaching and research are the two aims of Confucius. The following two sections are devoted to 'Religion in China', Confucianism and Taoism. Referring to the predominantly humanist and ethical teachings of Confucius, Dr. Radhakrishnan observed that Confucianism was uninspiring as a religion on account of its failing to satisfy the metaphysical needs and spiritual aspirations of man, which were partly fulfilled by Taoism and Buddhism. Taoism, which was similar to Indian thought in many respects, gave China a transcendental mysticism. But it neglected social well-being, and encouraged a sort of fatalism and indifference which were mistaken for renunciation. Buddhism and its influence on China form the subject-matter of the Lectures contained in the next two sections. Chinese thought, particularly Taoism, was greatly influenced by Buddhism, and China readily accepted the teachings of Buddha. The learned lecturer has given a greatly illuminating and clear exposition of the spread of Buddhism in China, and the growth of the different schools of Buddhism. He told his Chinese audience that they had to work for religious revival by truly following the methods of meditation and work as taught by Buddha. In China, as in India, he felt religion was becoming more mechanical and formal, which tendency ought to be checked. As the war continues in Europe and in Asia, Dr. Radhakrishnan has concluded these lectures with an appropriate subject for discussion, 'War and world security'. It is a fascinating survey of the complicated international situation which is becoming more complex week by week as the march of events shows. Addressing the Chinese people, who are themselves engaged in war, Dr. Radhakrishnan has presented a clear and correct picture of the unfortunate and regrettable attitude of the victors of the last War towards the vanquished and other causes which have led to the present war. He suggests the setting up of a commonwealth of nations with equality of opportunity for every one. A world-community of free nations, with no racial discrimination, alone can ensure world security and a just peace.

The Chinese are a great people with a rich and

ancient cultural heritage. Their morality is quite strict and refined. Dr. Radhakrishnan observed, during his visit, that though the force of ancient customs persisted in modern Chinese life, present-day China was gradually losing the distinctive traits of her ancient civilization owing to the penetration of Western culture. Foreseeing this Dr. Sun Yat-Sen had said, 'Ours might be revolt against the Eur-American civilization, but it will be the assertion of moral enlightenment against craftiness'. As a true well-wisher of the Chinese, Dr. Radhakrishnan has not hesitated to make it clear to them that in trying to imitate the West, if China abandons her essential spiritual values, inherited from the past, she will be restless and unhappy. China and India have many common problems. Both have important parts to play in the post-war world. These 'China lectures' will serve to strengthen our ties of friendship with the Chinese by each people getting to know more about the other. We recommend them to every Indian lover of China.

**THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE FOUR SCHOOLS OF VAIDIC PHILOSOPHY.** By A. S. IYENGAR. Published by V. S. Iyengar, Matunga, Bombay. Pp. 30. Price Re. 1.

The author, an official of the Bombay Secretariat, has done well in bringing out his excellent, though concise, exposition of the 'Fundamentals of the four schools of Vaidic philosophy' in a separate booklet. It was originally written as an 'introduction' to a philosophical work in sanskrit by a well-known South Indian scholar. The Brahmasutras epitomize the teachings of the Upanishads, and the great *Āchāryas* have written commentaries on them, interpreting them in different ways in accordance with the fundamental principles of their own schools of philosophy.\* In this resume, the author states briefly the fundamental principles of the four well-known schools of Indian philosophy, viz. Advaita of Shankara, Vishishtādvaita of Ramanuja, Dvaita of Madhva, and Sudhādvaita of Vallabha. The last school is popular more in Western India than in other parts, and is akin, in many respects, to that of Chaitanya who was a contemporary of Vallabha. Of these schools, the author is of the opinion that Ramanuja's Vaishnavism is the best and appeals to him most; he tries to make out that Ramanuja excels over the others, including Shankara. It is true Ramanuja is the leading Vaishnava philosopher whom most other dualistic sects have followed, directly or indirectly. From this it does not follow that the other *Āchāryas* were either wrong or inferior. Each commentator has dealt with texts of the Shrutis in a way which some others think not justified or clear. As the writer observes these differences between the *Āchāryas* do not proceed from spite, and notwithstanding these there are many points common to all of them. Differences are not in essence but only in expression. In the life of Ramakrishna Paramahansa we find the working out of the harmony that is the background of the different systems of thought. Dvaita, Vishishtādvaita, and Advaita are but three stages through which individuals have to advance to Truth.

The Advaita philosophy does not suit the vast majority of people as it is difficult to understand and practise, and cannot appeal to all. A true seeker of truth will appreciate the author's attitude that it is unprofitable in these days to quarrel on the basis of hair-splitting arguments when we are aware of the agreement on most fundamental points of the different schools.

**TEA INDUSTRY IN THE PUNJAB.** By GURDIT CHAND. Published by Rama Krishna and Sons, Lahore. Pp. 152. Price Rs. 3.

It is rather an unusual book. Though tea is widely grown and commonly used in India and Ceylon, the majority of people know very little regarding the tea industry. The author, a research scholar in economics, has made a thorough study of the working of tea plantations in the Kangra Valley of the Punjab, with special reference to labour problems. It is a matter of common knowledge that the life of the labourers in tea gardens is strenuous, while their economic condition is far from satisfactory. The author

reveals in the book the sad plight of millions of these poor people who live in 'dirty hovellike buildings' and receive petty compensation for their hard work. In these pages is presented an accurate and brief account of the growth and expansion of the tea industry in India and the Punjab, the different processes of cultivation and manufacture of tea, and labour problems. His suggestions concerning wages, housing, general health, and regulated work will, we hope, be found useful by tea-planters in ameliorating the condition of their labourers. The author says he has had to conduct his enquiry under certain difficulties such as unwillingness of the tea-planters to co-operate and dearth of literature on the subject. But this has only enhanced the worth of his laudable attempt in furnishing so much information on the different aspects of the tea industry. We congratulate the author on his pioneering enterprise in endeavouring to collect the relevant statistical and other data in the preparation of this work.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION (MAURITIUS BRANCH)

#### REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1944

The Report of the Ramakrishna Mission (Mauritius Branch), Port Louis, Mauritius, on the working of the Branch for the year 1944 shows that the Mission work in that distant Centre continued to progress in spite of difficulties brought on by the war. Besides daily worship, the Ashrama held weekly religious classes and occasional discourses in English and Tamil. The Mission Sevashrama treated more than 3750 patients during the year. The Desai Anathalaya (Hindu orphanage) under the Mission gave shelter to 16 inmates of whom 11 were boys. The Library and Reading Room worked on a small scale; and the Institute of Culture held classes for teaching Indian languages. The Mission conducted two night schools, containing over a hundred students in each. We are glad to note that the public of Mauritius, both official and non-official, and His Excellency the Governor have sympathetically associated themselves with the Mission work that is being carried on in this Island.

### CELEBRATION OF THE FOUNDATION DAY OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SARADA PITHA AND THE PRIZE DISTRIBUTION OF THE VIDYAMANDIRA (BELUR COLLEGE)

On the occasion of the celebration of the Foundation Day of the Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Pitha and the Annual Prize Distribution of the Vidyamandira (College) at Belur, a public meeting was held in the College premises on Saturday, the 10th February, 1945 at 4.30 p.m. with Dr. Shyamaprasad Mookherjee in the chair.

After the presentation of the Secretary's report about the progress of the institution in its College, Technical, and other departments during the last four years, Swami Sharvananda of the Ramakrishna Mission gave a brilliant exposition of the ideas and ideals for which the College stood. Dr. Shyamaprasad Mookherjee in his presidential address emphasized the need of religious instructions in educational institutions. He urged that unless education were based on religion, there was hardly any possibility of changing the present regrettable state of affairs of the world. He drew the pointed attention of the authorities of the institution to the responsibility that lay on their shoulders in running the Vidyamandira according to the noble ideals of Swami Vivekananda. He exhorted the students to fully utilize the opportunities they had got there for the formation of their life and character and wanted them to be the future heroes of the country. He further added that this residential College where there were adequate facilities for an all-round training of the students was the proper type of institution wanted in the country at the present day. In conclusion he remarked that no country could develop its own system of education until and unless it was free. He felt that if India was to get her rightful place in her own homeland, the people of the country should rebuild themselves according to the ideals laid down by Swami Vivekananda who was no doubt a great man of his times. Dr. Mookherjee asked the students to create and develop a burning resolve in their minds to serve the countrymen leaving aside all sorts of slogans. The Swami's message, he said, was 'to live and let live' and his was a message for the whole world.

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. L

MAY, 1945

No. 5



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निवोधत ।”

“Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI SHIVANANDA

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASIRAMA, BOMBAY, 1927

After the night meal all have gathered in Mahapurushji's room to have his holy company. There is absolute silence. After a while Mahapurushji began to talk of Swamiji (i.e. Swami Vivekananda). 'Swamiji spent many days with Chhabildas here. He visited many places around here at that time. Chhabildas was a member of the Arya Samaj. He didn't believe in God with form. He used to have many arguments with Swamiji on the subject. One day he said to Swamiji, "You argue that worship of God and image-worship- all these are right. Well, here I make a declaration: If you can convince me of the correctness of worship of God with form by adducing proof from the Vedas, I will then resign my membership of the Arya Samaj." Swamiji emphatically replied, "Oh yes. I can very easily do that." For days together after that, he continued to explain to Chhabildas passages from the Vedas which distinctly support worship of God with form. Swamiji was a man of extraordinary genius. In the end Chhabildas was compelled to accept the view of God with form and so, to keep his promise, he resigned from the Arya Samaj.

'While staying here Swamiji visited places like Poona. Ordinarily he would not travel

by train. But when he did so, he travelled first class. He would invariably refuse offers of monetary help. But if anybody insisted too much, he would then say, "All right. Buy me a first-class railway ticket." He often had stomach-troubles, and so a first-class compartment, having good lavatory arrangements, suited him very much. Once, I think, he was going to Limbdi, being invited by its ruler. As usual, he was in the first class and was lying on a berth with his upper body bare excepting for an under-garment. There were some respectable-looking men in the compartment. Seeing such a half-clad monk occupying a berth, they were completely upset and began to make all kinds of remarks among themselves in English. They said monks were the ruin of India, and things like that. Unconcerned, Swamiji lay and listened. But when they went too far, it became impossible for Swamiji to keep quiet. He started up and began arguing with them right away.

'He said, "What do you mean? Have the monks ruined India or saved her? Just consider for a moment what Buddha, Shankara, and Sri Chaitanya were to India and what they have done for her." He went on eloquently, showing from history how the monks

had saved India, and, refuting all their arguments, completely silenced them. Swamiji's learned English and his reasoning so impressed the leader of the party that he invited Swamiji to be his guest. Of course Swamiji could not accept the invitation, for he had already accepted the invitation of the ruler of Limbdi to be his guest. The ruler of Limbdi had great respect for Swamiji.'

After a while a monk asked Mahapurush Maharaj, 'Maharaj, who has given you the name, Mahapurush?'

**Maharaj:** 'Swamiji used to call me by this name.'

**Monk:** 'Why? Is there any special reason?'

**Maharaj:** 'Yes, there's. Even after coming in contact with Thakur I had to pay occasional visits to my home, as I was already married. But I hated it very much. I would merely pass a night, calling on God all the time. This would make my wife weep bitterly. So I appealed to Thakur to free me from all ties. He taught me a few practices and said, "Why fear? I am there; think of me and do these practices. There will be no harm even if you sleep with your wife in the same room. Rather it will intensify your renunciation." Thakur taught similar practices to Rukhal Maharaj also. By doing those practices I was saved from all troubles. One day I mentioned this to Swamiji in course of conversation. He was very much astonished and remarked, "How wonderful! This is the mark of a Mahapurush (a great soul). You must be a Mahapurush." Since then he began to call me Mahapurush. Now all call me by that name. Before this Swamiji used to call me Tarakda.'

'One day, at Balaram Babu's, Swamiji was calling me Mahapurush. Hearing this, Baburam Maharaj's mother said, "How is that? Mahapurush<sup>2</sup> lives in trees. What kind of Mahapurush is he then?" Swamiji explained to her saying, "He is not that kind of Mahapurush. He is a Mahapurush in the literal sense (i.e. a great soul)."'

BELUR MATH, JUNE 1927

Afternoon. Mahapurush Maharaj was standing on the eastern verandah of the Math building. He was watching, with great

<sup>1</sup> Tarak was the name given to Mahapurush Maharaj by his parents.

<sup>2</sup> Here it refers to spirits.

interest, feats demonstrated by the members of an athletic club of Calcutta. Other monks and devotees also were there. Mahapurush Maharaj had meanwhile sent a monk to get some sweets from the market. Referring to a boy's feat of muscle-control he said, 'This boy has given an excellent show.' Then, addressing the boy, he said, 'Do more of these things, my boy. Make more progress. And observe strict continence. Even in these matters of the body you require continence. That is the secret of success in everything you do. I would attribute most of our degradation to lack of continence.' Afterwards he saw to their being fed sumptuously and went upstairs.

He was very pleased with the feats. So he asked those who were nearby, 'Do you take regular physical exercise?' Some of them replied in the affirmative. Mahapurushji then continued, 'You ought to take physical exercise daily and regularly. That is the first step towards spiritual attainments. You must make the body strong. *Mens sana in corpore sano*—a sound mind in a sound body. Only a sound body can possess a sound mind. Think of the physique that Thakur's children possessed. Swamiji, Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda), Niranjan Swami, Sarat Maharaj—they were all great athletes. Swamiji, Maharaj, and few others took regular courses in athletics. Among us only Yogan Swami and Baburam Maharaj were comparatively weak. Unless you have a strong body how will you stand the strain of austerities and intense meditation? You are young men, you ought to take exercise. I don't mean you have to be athletes. Only keep the body fit. The mere monastic form won't do. The Upanishads say, "One must be young, good-natured, and studious. Also active, and sound in health and strong." Then only one is qualified for the knowledge of Brahman. Swamiji used to say, "namby-pamby, won't utter a word of protest even if slapped seven times—how can such men ever attain spirituality?" That is very true. If the body is sickly, all your attention will then be absorbed by it. How will you do meditation or study or work? Further, unless the body is strong, it can't stand the impact of high spiritual realizations. Either you go off your head or break down in health altogether. Moreover, you are the soldiers of Thakur and Swamiji.

How much work you have to do in the world ! Swamiji liked those who had strong physique. Because he himself possessed a

very strong body, it was possible for him to create a stir all over the world in such a short time.'

## THE CONQUEST OF SIN

BY THE EDITOR

*Even if thou be the greatest of all sinners thou canst cross the ocean of sin (in which thou art about to be drowned) with the help of the life-boat of knowledge.—Gita, IV. 36.*

Religion promises to save man from all sin. Except to congenital idiots or to men who have received the grace of God in full measure and gone beyond the dual throng of right and wrong, virtue and vice, the question of sin and its conquest is an ever recurring, painful, and pressing one.

The problem often agitates human beings in two ways. The first is the commission of sins, that is, of those acts which either conscience, social morality, or revealed religion prohibits. The second is the failure to do those right actions which are dictated as good and meritorious by one's own conscience or the moral laws of one's social group, or as spiritual laws by the religious book or authority to which one tenders allegiance.

Now, there is the instinct of self-preservation in every living organism. As an extension of this instinct rises the natural desire in every man to do only those things which he considers, in the light of the knowledge he possesses, to be conducive to his welfare in this world or in a future one. Another assumption on which we all act is that our welfare and happiness lie partly, if not fully, in our own hands, and that as a result of one's personal efforts one can improve one's lot in life. We desire and expect to enjoy the good fruits of the actions we do. We all want to reap a pleasing and successful harvest from what we have sown. Outgrowing the innocent irresponsibility of childhood, we enter into the responsible life of the adult with its hopes and fears, its rewards and punishments. But with this sense of responsibility come all our joys, and, alas, all our sorrows also. Arguing from our ordinary experience, we conclude that the sower of wheat does not harvest tares, and if we have

harvested tares it must be because we have sown tares. Thus we come to the conviction that *our* miseries are due to *our* sins, and *our* happiness is due to *our* good actions. Before we attain our majority, society also dragoons us into the idea that we have duties to perform towards *ourselves*, towards *our* neighbours, towards *our* community, towards *our* country, towards *our* God. The moment after we enter into the threshold of responsible adult life, we are continually struck back and forth like a shuttlecock between the two ideas of doing the right and avoiding the wrong. In the measure in which we fail in our virtuous duties and succeed in doing wicked deeds does society brand us as more or less sinful ; and we also gradually come to believe in *our* sinfulness, and feel ashamed and worried and desire to be freed from the evil consequences of our sinful deeds. In our heart of hearts we find it difficult to believe that we are sinful, but somehow we find we do things which we regret afterwards because they entail unpleasant consequences. What an immense importance we attach to the words 'good' and 'bad' ! From the cradle we unconsciously learn to apply them to things 'permitted' or 'not permitted'. Very few persons stop to enquire 'permitted by whom and why?' Seldom do we analyse why a thing is called good or bad but we sheepishly accept the implications of these appellations by somebody else, and entertain in our minds a vague feeling of goodness or badness when such words are used. Thoughtlessly we often condemn others or ourselves and become emotionally upset and feel we are lost.

### II

Sin is generally distinguished from crimes and offences recognized by the civil or criminal law. We generally use the term for those

offences by which a person seems to fall short of a course of conduct which is recognized as spiritually appropriate for him in his station in life. And many are the forms that sin may take. There are venial sins and mortal sins; sins committed openly and those committed secretly. Besides the sins of commission, there are the sins of omission. Then there is *original sin*,—which led to the Fall of Man and his liability to death—for Christians, for according to traditional Christianity all men are born sinners! Then there are the sins of heresy and unbelief for which orthodox Christians and Mohammedans prescribe the expiatory rite of sending the sinner to hell by burning or murder before he dies a natural death. There are also modern sins like that of Negroes aspiring to marry white girls, the punishment for which is lynching.

The ancient Persians had a sin-codex or a catalogue of sins with the expiatory acts prescribed for the cleansing of each sin. The Jews had also a similar code, as evidenced by *Leviticus*. The Hindus also had and have expiatory acts for any and every sin in the world. They have a regular section of their *Smritis* devoted to this topic, and it is called the *Prayaschitta Kanda*. But Hindus do not believe that man is a born sinner. According to them the human soul is pure and perfect, but through ignorance it finds itself in strange situations of sin. Sin is something external to the soul and can be removed or destroyed by proper expiatory acts. The catalogue of sins is so great that a man will have to spend his whole life in expiatory acts if he is truly conscientious.

### III

Sin-consciousness primarily arose in man when he felt he had done something which estranged him from his God, and tended to break the natural relation of communion between himself and his God. Non-observance of rituals became, in the higher religions, a sin against God's holiness and love. Man also felt from early times that this communion with God could be restored by the earning of the forgiveness of sins.

In all dualistic or theistic religions all sins or offences displeasing the Personal God who is worshipped have to be atoned for. The nature of this atonement depends however upon the nature of the worshipper as well as that of his God. The less civilized and educated the worshipper, the cruder and

more savage are the forms of atonement. Or, as the Hindus will put it, atonement will be *tamasic*, *rajasic*, or *sattvic* according to the nature of the sinner. Also much depends upon the nature of the God worshipped. If the God is conceived as cruel or blood-thirsty, naturally He will have to be propitiated by offerings acceptable to His nature. Hence the prevalence of sacrifices of animals and of even human beings in order to win God's favour or to avert His vengeance or punishment for sins against Him, and establish once more the relation of worshipper and worshipped mutually benefiting each other. But in some cases the God worshipped is so cruel that He sends those sinners with whom He is displeased to 'eternal damnation' or hell-fire (*Josh. vii. 24*; *Jer. li. 62*); or the sinners are so incorrigible by nature, like Satan himself, that God has no other go but to punish them severely. (*Gita, XVI. 19, 20*).

### IV

All of us want to follow the line of the least pain and that of the greatest pleasure. The growth of sophistication and cleverness enables us to have new ways of avoiding pain and of increasing our pleasures. Though sincere amendment is the best way of conquering sin, very few of us are equal to such a heroic step. For repentance and amendment we often want to substitute expiation, whenever possible, in some form or other. We fall down a degree lower when we want somebody else to do the expiation on our behalf, and we are willing to pay liberally to be saved from the evil consequences of our sins. So we seek out ascetics and holy persons who may vicariously take our sins and save us.

The Jews invented the ritual of the 'scape-goat' which bears upon itself all the iniquities of the people, and is then sent into the wilderness. Some such idea also seems to lie behind the setting free of a marked bull after the death of a person among brahmins in some parts of India. From such practices developed the idea of vicarious atonement which plays a large part in the religious life of most people, especially Roman Catholics and Hindus. It is believed that the sinner can be cleansed if somebody else makes vicarious penance for him. The sale of Indulgences in medieval times is an instance in point. There was scarcely a devotion or good work of any kind for which Indulgences could

not be obtained. In 1456, the recitation of a few prayers before a church crucifix earned a Pardon of 20,000 years for every such repetition. In 1450 Thomas Gascoigne, the great Oxford Chancellor, wrote: 'Sinners say, nowadays, "I care not how many or how great sins I commit before God, for I shall easily and quietly get plenary remission of any guilt and penalty whatsoever (*cujusdam culpae et poenae*) by absolution and indulgence granted to me from the Pope, whose writing and grant I have bought for 4d. or 6d. or for a game of tennis." Whatever the orthodox theory on the subject might have been, the Pope or his delegated agents were supposed by the common people to have the power of absolution and remission of sins, past, present, or future, as they were considered to represent God on earth.'

Another but less well-known instance of vicarious suffering is that furnished by the Sin-Eater, a man who, for a trifling payment, was believed to take upon himself, by means of food and drink, the sins of a deceased person. This custom was once very common in England and in the Highlands of Scotland, and obtains even now in some parts of Central Europe. Each village had its official Sin-Eater. A similar custom obtains among the brahmins in India.

Hindus believe that by offering appropriate gifts to brahmins or other holy persons or temple-gods various sins can be expiated or merit acquired which may stand in good stead in the future. The Brahmans are supposed to be pure and are believed to take up the sins of those sinners upon themselves and burn them up by their penance and superior knowledge.

Such ideas are gradually extended. The whole nation may suffer for the sins of the ruler, and the ruler is supposed to take upon his shoulders the burden of the sins of his subjects. The Jews believed that the nation suffered for the sin of the individual (*Josh. vii. 10-15*) and the individual for the sin of his kinsfolk (*2 Sam. xxi. 1-9; Deut. v. 9-10*); or of the nation (*Ezek. xxxi. 3, 4*). Finally the servant of Jehovah is conceived as atoning for sinners by his sufferings and death.

The Jewish idea has been taken over by Christians, and of Jesus Christ, it is said, 'He is the propitiation for our sins'. Finally the doctrine is developed in Christianity that

salvation is possible to the sinner *only* by the belief that Christ died so that man may be cleansed from sin, and that the sinner must identify himself with Christ by faith in order to be saved. As the Westminster Confession declares: 'The Lord Jesus Christ, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal spirit once offered up to God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father, and purchased not only reconciliation but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those whom the Father hath given unto him.' Article Thirty-one of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England says, 'The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world.' But how was the justice of the Father satisfied? The early Church Fathers held, *inter alia*, that Christ paid a ransom to Satan to induce him to release men from his power. Others considered it a satisfaction to God's honour rather than a ransom or penalty so that the outrage of man's sin is made good. Some others, unable to square up their ideas of the nature of God with these views, hold that Christ atoned by offering up to God a perfect confession of the sins of mankind and an adequate repentance for them, with which divine justice is satisfied, and a full expiation is made for human guilt. Still others say that Christ died not to 'propitiate' God, but to reconcile man to God; his death manifests righteousness and thus reveals the heinousness of sin; it also reveals the love of God and His forgiveness for the sinner; thus men are moved to repentance and faith, and are able to effect their salvation. Some people, unable to appreciate the necessity for such a cruel death as that of the Crucifixion, suggest that vicarious penitence and not vicarious suffering is the key to atonement. Emphasis is laid on the mystical self-identification of Christ with the sinner.

As a corollary to the vicarious penitence or vicarious suffering, whichever you may prefer to it, of Christ are the sins of 'heresy' and 'unbelief'. These are the subtlest but most cruel of the forms in which man cloaks his individual or tribal self-love and his hatred of his enemies. Men in earlier times could not even conceive of a God who could favour their enemies as against themselves, His declared worshippers and supporters. Even in Europe

each village will fight for its black doll of the Virgin against that of the next village. Only in a small percentage of humanity is the idea well developed that God, by His very nature, should be the God of all. In most religions God begins as the God of a particular tribe and often ends there. The Hebrew God, like the Vedic Gods or the Greek Gods, was supposed to interfere effectively in battles in which the fate of his worshippers was being decided. Christians and Mohammedans generally believe that their God will reserve paradise for them, while he will send all unbelievers and heretics to hell to be roasted there for ever in its sulphurous fires. What can be a more ludicrous spectacle than that of some Christian nations praying to their God to give them victory as against other Christian nations, not to speak of non-Christian nations! And if God can roast sinful people in hell-fire, it was but just and proper that his worthy worshippers should burn or murder heretics and unbelievers by the thousands to give them in this life itself a foretaste of the punishment that is in store for them when they give up their ghosts! How many innocent people have atoned for these sins of heresy or disbelief by a cruel death! The Albigensian heretics, forming almost the entire population of part of the Rhone valley were practically exterminated in A.D. 1200 by the orders of the Pope Innocent III. The Holy Inquisition is reported to have burnt or executed over 35,000 people between 1481 and 1834. Fifty thousand French Protestants were massacred on St. Bartholomew's Day in 1572. Even in this twentieth century we have remnants (or shall we say revivals?) of heresy-hunting, in the more backward American States, carried out by the fiercely Protestant secret Ku Klux Klan Society. Where, on account of the spread of civilization and tolerance, heresy-hunting is become out of date, a new sin, the sin of belonging to coloured or inferior races is being manufactured, of which Jew-baiting and Negro-lynching are glaring instances. In human society these are some of the worst and most ineradicable forms in which sin itself masquerades under the form of righteousness.

## V

The multifarious forms in which the consciousness of sin in men manifests itself are an indication of the deep-rooted nature of man's consciousness of his imperfections, and of the

deep human urge to rise upwards to complete purity or freedom from sin. To believers in a Personal God the complete destruction of sin can come only through the grace of God, and this necessarily implies a faith in the redemptive powers of such a God. This is one of the reasons why Christians, to whom God is a Person, cling so tenaciously to the faith in the redemptive power of Christ. Take away this prop and the edifice of Christianity crumbles down. Science has been destroying the foundations of the Christian Faith by questioning the unique features of the Crucifixion and by characterizing them as myths. Some obvious questions also arise for which no sane or reasonable answer can be given by Christians. If the way to heaven is only through a belief in Christ, what then has been the fate of the millions who lived and died before Christ? Did the All-merciful Father consign all those souls to eternal hell-fire, for evidently the Father had not been propitiated, and divine justice had not been satisfied before the crucifixion of Christ? Again what about the salvation of millions of human beings who do not believe in Christ and have not even heard of him? To Christians believing in only one life for man on this earth, the vast majority of men and women must be sent to eternal damnation by All-merciful God, because it has fallen to their lot to be non-Christians. The absurdity of an intolerant and untenable religious belief can go no further. And yet what a strange spectacle we see of educated Christian missionaries, trying, by fair means or foul, to convert ignorant 'pagans' to such a creed! The followers of Mohammed as the only true prophet, of Rama or Krishna or Vishnu or any other God or Goddess as the only saviour, cannot but become bigots. And such bigots send not only others to hell but end by themselves going there even in this very life, for intolerance is a hellish thing. It is indeed a cruelly idiotic conception of God that makes Him send the majority of mankind to perdition. The fact seems to be that God is not to blame, but our conceptions about Him.

## VI

Vedanta, however, while recognizing the useful elements in all religions, shows us a permanent way to solve the problem of sin. So long as we recognize good, we have to recognize evil. Ordinarily, when the element

of virtue or goodness seems to be predominant we call the action good; and actions are sinful when what we consider evil or sinful seems to take the upper hand. But actions are neither good nor bad in themselves except with reference to the supreme ends of human life. For example, absolute continence is a virtue for monks, but not for married people, in both Catholicism and Hinduism. But Protestantism and Mohammedanism seem to condemn it as an evil and against the intentions of God as expressed in the laws of biology. But Catholic and Hindu monks have expressly repudiated the necessity of submitting to this biological law, because they have caught glimpses of a higher law which says that voluntary and intelligent renunciation of carnal pleasures is the first step in the higher life of the spirit. Sin is called *पातक* in Sanskrit, that is, it is that which makes you go downwards spiritually. The fundamental basis for the classification of sins has therefore been from the standpoint of spirituality or godliness. All that makes for godliness is virtue; the opposite is sin. For those who do not believe in God, mental harmony or wholeness of personality may be the standard. To the Vedantist the standard is the Pure Self in all things. Anything which makes you forget your real nature is sin. Wilful destruction of one's own body is not so suicidal a crime as this forgetting of one's real nature. And what is this real nature of the self?

It is indicated by such words as: greater than the greatest; subtler than the subtlest; immanent and yet transcendent; immortal; beyond the reach of sense-perception; ever pure; ever free; the seer, the subject of all experience; of the nature of pure consciousness, existence, and bliss. The self is not born, and does not die; it is not the body, senses, mind, or intellect but beyond all these, transcending them and yet infilling them all. 'He who has perceived that which is without sound, without touch, without form, without decay, without taste, eternal, without beginning, without end, beyond the *mahat* and unchangeable is freed from the jaws of death.' (*Katha*, I. iii. 15). Again, 'He who knows the bliss of that Brahman (or Self) from which all speech with the mind turns away unable to reach it, he fears nothing. He does not distress himself with

the thought, Why did I not do what is good? Why did I do what is bad?' (*Taittiriya*).

How can it be said that the wise man who knows the real nature of the Self is freed from all sin? Sin implies a sense of responsibility as doer, a sense of guilt of having done wrong things or failed to do the right ones and the innate belief that the doer will have to suffer the consequences of his deeds. That is how we all get caught in this world: we feel we are human beings, with duties to perform, with ends to achieve. We identify ourselves with our limited human capacities and consider ourselves happy or miserable, virtuous or sinful in the measure in which we succeed in trying to attain our limited ends. The weakness or strength of our instruments, like our bodies and our minds, we consider as our own weakness. But none of these are a real part of ourselves. These come and go. But the self is unchanging and only by the realization of its real nature do we lose all fear of being bound by our little hopes and fears, our puerile sins and virtues. Just as a man, waking up from dreams, both sweet and bitter, does not consider himself blessed or guilty, happy or miserable thereby, so waking up in the true nature of our self, we shall find that all these ideas of good and evil, guilt and innocence, morality and immorality are all but experiences which do not affect our real nature. Even in the waking state we do many acts in hotter moments, for which we are ashamed when we return to our normal senses. We say we are *beside* ourselves with anger or with passion. That is to say, these are external to us and have only overpowered our true nature for a moment. Similarly are the ideas of all other imperfections really external to us. We have to increase our knowledge, and take our stand on our true self. Then shall we know that misery and sin are external to us and no part of us whatsoever; we shall cease to feel their sting; just as the blindness of blind men does not affect the sun's shining, so do our ignorant conceptions of ourselves not affect our true nature. This is a knowledge that has to be cultivated as sedulously as anything else. This knowledge is gained more and more by self-control, by not being slaves to the demoniacal desires for possessions and enjoyments. Above all one must acquire faith in the possibility of such knowledge, a faith based on the *prima facie*

case made out for it by the unanimous testimony of all truly great religious leaders. Such faith is a fundamental pre-requisite for initiating conscious activity of all kinds in whatever direction.

To those whose minds are inclined to the conception of a Personal God a similar act of faith is necessary for redemption. The goodness and omnipotence of the Personal God have to be taken for granted, or believed on authority. What the dualistic or theistic religions have to do is not to discard faith in their God and His saving power, but to enlarge their ideas of the nature of God as the God, not of one sect or creed or race, but the God of all the universe, who appears in diverse Incarnations and is not without a witness, in every age and every land, to His power, glory, and mercy. Vedanta says that man is, in his real nature, pure and perfect. Sin is destroyed, misery is removed by a realization of this divine nature. The dualistic religions posit a God separate from man. This God also is conceived as perfect and pure, almighty and omniscient, and taking a special interest in the saving of man, His creation. So long as men and women in the average are what they are they will certainly desire to find some means of escape from the evil consequences of their own sins, those tormenting imps born out of lust and greed, the twin enemies of man's peace and happiness. To all such some kind of ritualistic expiatory act which promises to give relief will always be a psychological necessity. It may take the form of saying of prayers, the giving of gifts to the church, the temple, or the mosque; it may be the paying of

priests to do *puja* or to say mass on behalf of the sinner. The maintenance of monks, the feeding of brahmins and *sadhus*; fasting and abstinence from sexual satisfaction for a definite period; the reading of holy books like the Ramayana, the Bhagavadgita, the Bible, or the Koran; the telling of beads; pilgrimages to holy places; the confession of sins, openly or privately; the worship of saints living or dead; the financing of funds to convert the 'heathen',—such are the innumerable forms which this urge for expiation may take. But such expiations are good only if they are effective in not only effacing the sense of personal guilt of the sinners but also in producing real amendment. Otherwise they become mockeries. Each man will, of course, have to be his own judge in these matters of what is beneficial to him.

But it seems to us that in order to reach the highest, man should not seek a sanction for any of the motives of action except in his own true nature. The highest character, the greatest freedom is developed when a man does what he considers right because it is his nature, not from fear of anything external to him. For is not the whole world but a manifestation of the infinite Self that he is truly? To reach this end the worshipper of a Personal God must love God for His sake, because He is so lovable, and not from hopes of rewards and favours. He must learn to see the face of his Beloved in *all* things, those that are called good and those that are called evil. Only thus can he be freed finally from the consciousness of sin and its implications.

By repeating a hundred times, 'I am a sinner', one verily becomes a sinner. One should have such faith as to be able to say, 'What? I have taken the name of God; how can I be a sinner?' God is our Father and Mother. Tell Him, 'O Lord, I have committed sins, but I won't repeat them.' Chant His name and purify your body and mind. Purify your tongue by singing God's holy name.

—*Sri Ramakrishna*

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN THE WEST\* ,

By SWAMI ATULANANDA

Through the newspapers Swami Vivekananda's fame was heralded all over America. And after the Congress a lecture bureau invited him to make a lecture tour through the United States. The Swami accepted the invitation hoping thereby to create a universal interest and sympathy for the religious ideas of the Hindus, and to correct the mistaken notions the people of America held about his motherland.

We must remember that all along during his sojourn in the West the Swami remained the true patriot. To raise India in the esteem of the West was one of his main objects while abroad.

During this tour the Swami spoke in numerous cities preaching Vedanta and the glories and greatness of Indian culture. It was a strenuous life, lecturing in one city, then on the train, and lecturing in another city, day in and day out, always travelling, always speaking. Wherever he appeared in public the halls were filled to their utmost capacity. His audiences were kept spell-bound by his eloquence and wisdom.

However, the Swami discovered (after a while) that the lecture bureau was not dealing honestly with him. Furthermore, he felt that the time had come to begin his real spiritual work. This could be done with individuals only, not with the masses. He, therefore, severed his connection with the bureau.

But this did not mean that the Swami took rest. His work went on with renewed vigour. From everywhere invitations came pouring in for the Swami to lecture. Clubs, ethical societies, religious organizations from all over the States implored him to give speeches and to hold classes.

Hundreds of liberal-minded persons felt that the Swami was a prophet with a new message. Scholars, scientists, and millionaires vied with each other in doing him honour. He was lionized by society, and numerous receptions were given in his honour.

But in the midst of all this popularity the

Swami's heart bled for India. The guest of honour in magnificent mansions, entertained in royal style, bathing in luxury, showered with praise, the Swami instead of feeling happy, often felt miserable. He thought of the masses of India dying by the millions for want of a handful of rice. His bed of down seemed to him a bed of thorns. Name and fame and wealth seemed to him a mockery. And in the middle of the night he would call out, 'O mother, how can I help my country? How can I feed the hungry? How can I raise the masses?' Thus he passed nights in tears while the papers were singing his praise, and the most distinguished persons in America courted his friendship.

The Swami now gave a series of lectures in Brooklyn, opposite New York City. The large lecture hall was packed to overflowing. Doctors and lawyers, judges and teachers, and many ladies came from all parts of the city to listen to his strangely beautiful and eloquent exposition of the Hindu religion. This series of lectures constituted the real beginning of his more serious work.

At the earnest request of some sincere students the Swami went to live in New York City. Here he held classes every morning and evening. And on Sundays he gave public lectures.

The work was now on the right footing. The Swami came into close contact with earnest seekers after truth. Then he instructed privately in yoga practices and meditation. He himself radiated spirituality. In his sweet, melodious voice he chanted the sacred *mantras* of the Vedas, thus creating in his classes an atmosphere of peace and holiness.

To meet the Swami personally was to love and revere him. For it was his wonderful personality that spoke clearer even than his words. One could not but realize that one stood in the presence of a brilliant mind, a loving heart, a dynamic force, a superman, born to be a world-teacher.

\* Concluded from the April number.

But now the great success with which the Swami met everywhere created jealousy in the hearts of some self-interested persons. They began to spread scandalous reports about him. But the Swami remained serene and unmoved in the midst of these unwarranted attacks.

Fearlessly he delivered his message leaving the results in the hands of divine Providence. To work he had the right, this he knew, but not to the fruits thereof. He worked untiringly, looking neither backward nor forward, fired with only one ambition, to preach the truth and nothing but the truth. He knew that the world stood in need of his teaching and he gave it freely to every one who wished to accept it. Obstacles only served to make him more determined.

The Swami had to meet all kinds of people. Sometimes he had to answer stupid and irritating questions. Some ignorant persons knew nothing about India. They held the crudest notions about the Hindus. All they knew was that the Hindus were heathen. But the Swami's brilliant wit soon silenced them.

Once after a lecture he was asked if Hindu mothers threw their babies in the river to feed the crocodiles. 'Yes,' the Swami said, smiling, 'when I was a baby they threw me in the river too. A big, fat crocodile swallowed me up. But like your Jonah of the Bible I came out again after three days.' The entire audience roaring with laughter applauded the Swami's ready wit. And the questioner turned red with shame.

On another occasion a woman asked if the Hindus burned their widows. The Swami turning on her in scorn, replied, 'Madam, we never burned witches as you Western people used to do'.

But the Swami also met with wonderful personal experiences. Sometimes he had to deliver as many as twelve lectures in a single week. It was a terrible physical and mental strain. He sometimes felt that he had depleted himself intellectually, and he could not think of new subjects to speak about. So it happened once that on the day before an announced lecture, his mind seemed totally devoid of ideas—a common occurrence with public speakers and authors. What was to be done? 'What shall I say in my lecture tomorrow?' the Swami thought, 'I

shall have to address a vast audience. How shall I meet the situation?' Discouraged, he retired for the night. And then, as he lay stretched on his bed, in the middle of the night he heard a voice speaking to him. It seemed to come from a long, long distance, and was hardly audible. He listened attentively. Then the voice came nearer and became louder. At last it seemed to be right beside his bed. And the Swami heard in clear, distinct words the outline of a most interesting lecture. This lecture he delivered on the following day. And the audience was charmed.

At another time the Swami heard in the night two voices discussing the very subject he had chosen for a lecture. These phenomena the Swami explained as wider functioning of his own mind. His own mind was acting as his guru.

During this period of his life Swami Vivekananda had wonderful psychic powers. But these he did not use unless there was real need for it. He could change the whole trend of a person's life by a mere touch. He could read a person's mind and could know his past and future. And he could heal diseases.

These powers came to him uninvited. He told his disciples not to work for psychic power but to give all their time and energy to the realization of God. Far greater than these powers was the Swami's grandeur and unspeakable beauty of soul and character. In these he transcended any person his disciples had ever been acquainted with.

One of the most beautiful experiences the Swami had during his first visit to America was his visit to Thousand Island Park. But before he went there he spent several weeks at the home of an American friend (in Percy, N. H.). Here he spent his time in quiet and solitude in the beautiful forests surrounding the place. With only the Gita as his companion he was all day in the woods giving himself to meditation. Here his soul rose to spiritual heights as he but seldom had reached before. Here he prepared himself for the work that awaited him at Thousand Island Park.

One of the Swami's students owned a cottage at Thousand Island Park, the largest island in the St. Lawrence River. She offered the use of it to the Swami and as many of his staunch admirers as it would

accommodate. This appealed to the Swami, and he agreed to go there.

It was a charming spot far away from the noise and bustle of cities. The only sound heard there was the sweet song of birds, and the gentle sighing of the wind in the trees. In this scene of enchantment the Swami and his disciples spent seven happy weeks.

Only the Swami's truest friends were with him, twelve in all. These the Swami looked upon as his disciples. He initiated them by giving them *mantram*. Five took the vows of lifelong *brahmacharya*, and two were given *sannyasa*.

Never was the Swami more gentle, more lovable than during these weeks. It was a perpetual inspiration to be with him. The disciples lived in a constant atmosphere of intense spirituality.

One day the Swami suddenly left the little group and retired to his room. A few hours later he returned. He had written the 'Song of the Sannyasin,' one of his masterpieces, a song burning with the spirit of renunciation. His teachings during these days were published afterwards, and can now be found in the book called *Inspired Talks*.

The seven weeks at Thousand Island Park were one of the freest and greatest periods in the Swami's life. And there, one night, alone on the bank of the St. Lawrence River, in a mood of supreme ecstasy he entered into *nirvikalpa samadhi*. This he did not reveal at the time. But afterwards he spoke of it as one of the most sublime moments of his life.

Having fulfilled his great work of training and initiating disciples at Thousand Island Park the Swami returned to New York, and then he made preparations to go to England where he had been invited. He sailed for England in the middle of August 1895.

Here again his success was phenomenal. But wishing to place the American work on a firm basis he returned to New York in December of the same year. The work in New York during his absence had been carried on by his disciples.

The Swami's visit to England, though a strenuous experience, had been most pleasant. He returned to New York in splendid health and spirits. Together with his American disciple Swami Kripananda he made his headquarters in 30th Street. They occupied

two spacious rooms which could accommodate one hundred and fifty persons. But when the Swami opened his classes the rooms were at once so crowded that there was not even standing room left. So a huge hall was rented with a seating capacity of over one thousand and five hundred. Here the Swami gave his lectures. These lectures created a wave of enormous enthusiasm. Young men and women came to the Swami to receive *mantram*. And one devout disciple, Dr. Street, took *sannyasa*. Thus in one year the Swami made three American *sannyasins*.

The very heart of American civilization was now roused. Thousands of persons accepted Vedanta as their religion. The Swami's lectures on Raja Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Karma Yoga created such an interest that they were published, and they sold by the thousands.

Then, in February 1896, the Swami consolidated his American work by organizing the Vedanta Society of New York. After this came another lecture tour, to Detroit and other cities in the United States. And when the Swami returned to New York it was only to make himself ready for a second visit to England to systematize the work there. He sailed from New York on April 15, 1896. This ended his first visit to America.

On his arrival in England a pleasant surprise awaited the Swami. He found there his *gurubhāī*, Swami Saradananda, who had come from Calcutta at his call. It was a joyous meeting. Swami Saradananda could give him all the news from India, and they spent hours and hours planning for the future. All his old friends in London welcomed Swami Vivekananda most heartily. Many persons of distinction visited him, and new people became his steadfast followers.

In May the Swami opened his classes. His whole soul went in his work. He gave his new students an entirely new outlook on religion. Some who came as sceptics became his faithful workers and helpers in spreading the cause.

After a season of continuous work in London the Swami was well-nigh exhausted. He, therefore, gladly accepted the invitation of some intimate friends for a holiday-tour on the continent of Europe. The party went to Switzerland, into the snow mountains, to

Italy, Germany, and Holland. After six delightful weeks they returned to London.

Swami Saradananda, in the mean time, had gone to America to conduct the work there. But now Swami Abhedenanda had arrived from Calcutta. He had come at the urgent call of Swami Vivekananda to continue the work in London as Swami Vivekananda himself longed to go back to his motherland.

Swami Abhedenanda was successful from the beginning; so Swami Vivekananda was satisfied to leave the work in his charge. And on December 16, 1896, accompanied by his faithful disciples, Mr. and Mrs. Sevier, and Mr. Goodwin, he undertook the return journey from Europe to India. When the steamer reached Colombo on January 15, 1897, it was three years, seven months, and fourteen days since the Swami had seen his motherland.

What joy to stand once again on Indian soil ! Before the Swami sailed from England, a Western disciple had asked him, 'Well, Swami, how will you like now your motherland after three years' experience of the luxurious, glorious, and powerful West ?' And the Swami's reply had been, 'India I loved before I came away. Now her very dust has become sacred to me, the very air is now to me holy, it is the sacred land, the *tirtha*, the land of pilgrimage, where every soul must be born to pay the final debt of *karma*.'

Yes, Swami Vivekananda loved India ! The very name, India, was sweet and sacred to him. For India he lived, for India he had laboured in the West, for India he was ready to die. He loved her rich, and he loved her poor, the learned and the ignorant. He loved her Rishis, her art, her philosophy, her sacred scriptures. He loved India's past, he loved her present, he dreamt of and laboured for her future.

Now he was home again ! Of the wonderful reception his countrymen gave him, it has been recorded in the book called *Lectures from Colombo to Almora* with which most of us are acquainted. Two years and a half were spent in India. Then the urge came again, the call to revisit the West, to conquer new lands, to bring light to new souls. This second visit to Europe and America was of much shorter duration, but not less important.

The Swami sailed this time from Calcutta on June 20, 1899. He was accompanied by

Swami Turiyananda and Sister Nivedita. They reached London on July 31, and two weeks later the two Swamis started for America. On arrival at New York Mr. Leggett took them at once to his beautiful country-home on the Hudson River, one hundred and fifty miles from New York. Here Swami Abhedenanda joined them and later Sister Nivedita. As Swami Vivekananda's health was far from satisfactory he sent Swami Turiyananda to New York, but he himself took rest till November 5. When he came to New York he was received with great enthusiasm at the permanent home of the Vedanta Society.

The Swami's friends, seeing him in such poor health, deemed it necessary that he should spend the winter in a milder climate. So they arranged a trip to California. The Swami left for California on November 22, breaking his journey at Chicago where many receptions were given him. He arrived in Los Angeles in the beginning of December.

It was Swami Vivekananda's first visit to California. He was delighted with the beautiful scenery and the soft, mild climate. In California the roses were in bloom, and the air was scented with orange blossom. He was in the land of eternal summer and perpetual sunshine.

Hundreds of people who had read his books now were anxious to see and hear the author. The Swami lectured almost daily in Los Angeles and adjacent cities. From Los Angeles he went north to San Francisco, the largest city in California. Here he lectured again, held classes, started a Vedantic Society and visited neighbouring cities till May. While in San Francisco he received a gift of one hundred and sixty acres of land for a place of retreat for students of Vedanta. This place is now known as the Shanti Ashrama.

The Swami now received an invitation from Paris to attend the 'Congress of the History of Religions' to be held there in July 1900. So he returned to New York and from there sailed for France where further fame awaited him. He was never to see America again.

He was in France till October, and after visiting once more different places in Europe he came back to India in December 1900. His work in the West was finished. The roaring lion of Vedanta had delivered his message.

Materialistic philosophy was gaining ground everywhere in America at the time when Swami Vivekananda arrived. Science and philosophy had undermined the foundation of the Christian Churches. The Western nations had begun to doubt the long-established doctrines of their own Faiths. This tide of materialism the Swami stemmed with the glorious message of Vedanta.

He taught his Western disciples how through meditation they could get a vision of their own real Self, the *ātman*, ever free, beyond all desires, self-established in its own glory. He taught them how to rise above religious sectarianism and superstitions. He kindled in their hearts love for all divine Incarnations. He taught them to adore all world-saviours as divine messengers of light. Thus he broke down the barriers which different Churches had established.

He accomplished the Herculean task of popularizing Vedanta in the West. He pointed to the ancient culture and ideals of his own land. He brought home to the prosperous West the fact that she had something to learn from poor India. He taught the Christian world that there is another religion which surpasses their own in philosophical depth and spiritual intensity. And in doing so he raised India in the estimation

of foreign nations. He roused in strangers sincere love for his own country. He established a better understanding between East and West. He brought the entire world closer together.

As a result of the Swami's visit to the West the world is now enriched with that mass of invaluable literature known as *Complete Works of the Swami Vivekananda*, a collection of his recorded lectures and conversations, his letters and writings. These works, at least in part, are now translated into different languages, and all the civilized nations can now study them and draw from them their inspiration.

In Swami Vivekananda's teachings the world has received food for earnest thought for centuries to come. To these teachings the world will turn for light and guidance to settle the great problems that, in the future, will face humanity.

Even as the lion bold and fearless, even as the wind never caught in a net, even as the lotus not touched by water, even so Swami Vivekananda passed through this world, the bull of his race, a prince amongst men. To that great world-teacher, the father, the friend, the guide of humanity... we look for wisdom and inspiration.

## RAMAKRISHNA MISSION: ITS IDEAL AND OBJECTS\*

BY SWAMI VIRAJANANDA

It is a pleasure to meet you annually to review the achievements of the Mission in the past, to make fresh and united resolves for the future, and to be inspired for all time by the realization that the hands of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda are guiding us in all our efforts. From the Secretary's report you have learnt that the Mission has made some progress during 1944 against tremendous odds. This has been possible because of the inherent strength of the message of Swamiji and your active faith in it. I use the phrase 'active faith' deliberately. For, what Swamiji wrote about the Ramakrishna Math is equally true of the Ramakrishna Mission: 'This organization is his very body, and in this organization itself he is ever present.' The true worship

for the members of this organization consists in active participation in all its undertakings, and not in being mere believers in its goodness, and passive spectators of its successes and failures. Sri Ramakrishna is guiding and will ever guide his Mission. But he expects us to be willing partners in this divine *lila* (play). Our faith in Sri Ramakrishna and his Mission must be galvanized into active service for him in his diverse human forms. Short of this, mere love, admiration, or sympathy for organized activity will not lead us much beyond the traditional psychological attitudes and expressions of devotion for the Lord. Swamiji could not recommend these as *yuga-*

\* The Presidential Address at the Annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission, 1945.

*dharma* (the religion of the age). When he said even of the Math that it should not be reduced to a *thakurbari* (temple) of the *babujis* (Vaishnava sect), he could not certainly mean that the members of his Mission should be indulging in empty complacency. How emphatically and with what deep pathos the blazing words of indignation poured out of Swamiji's lips! 'There is too much talk, talk, talk! We are great! We are great! Nonsense! We are imbeciles, that is what we are!' All the utterances of Swamiji lead but to one conclusion: he wanted his followers to translate his message into intense action for serving the poor, the illiterate, and the helpless.

These are some of the ideas that are foremost in my mind as I address you at this moment of passing hurriedly in review a year of stress and strain through which the Mission has just passed. I am conscious of and admire the united effort of the Mission. But I cannot remain satisfied with that alone; for the questions of Swamiji still ring in my ears and make me ill at ease: - 'Do you feel that millions are starving today and millions have been starving for ages? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud? Does it make you sleepless? . . . Has it made you almost mad? Are you seized with that one idea of the misery of ruin? Have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, even your own bodies?'

I am more impressed by the urgency and all-consuming demand of Swamiji's message as I look at the world at war. Nations are at death-grips with each other, and it appears to a superficial observer as though religion has failed and the devil has taken possession of the world. Swamiji foresaw this state of affairs and found an antidote for it in the elevation of human relationships to a higher divine plane, which was to be brought about by a more active religion, intimately connected with and inspiring life as a whole and in all its multifarious manifestations. He wanted a religion that would not confine itself within the four walls of churches, mosques, monasteries, or temples, but would spring into life at every meeting of human beings, in every walk of life, more so in contacts between the rich and the poor, the high and the low, the learned and the ignorant. The salvation of mankind lies in recognizing the

real worth of humanity and worshipping it with all the energy and devotion that man can command. For, says Swamiji, 'Where should you go to seek for God? Are not the poor, the miserable, the weak, gods? Why not worship them first? . . . Who cares for these tinsel puffs of name?'

Struggle for power, oppression of the weak, and exploitation of the poor will stalk the world so long as men are not filled with divine love for all beings. Swamiji's message has thus a greater possibility than we yet visualize. It was no flattering self-complacency when Swamiji declared that the West was waiting for the message to come from the East. But the West understands action better than words, achievement more than philosophical disquisition. Swamiji was, therefore, careful not to indulge in oratory alone, but he gave practical direction to his conviction. To us of the Ramakrishna Mission he has left this invaluable heritage, and on us has devolved the responsibility of not only keeping his words ablaze, but of inspiring others with them; not only to believe in their potency, but to make them real in our own lives; not only to seek for personal salvation, but to help others to manifest their inner divinity. All this implies unstinted devotion to the Mission, of which you are members. When a handful of persons resolve to achieve anything and we are a handful, to be sure—they have to intensify their resolve to the last sacrifice. All faltering, all diffidence must be cast to the winds, because capacity for service grows by use, and no good work can be entirely lost.

One thing I must make perfectly clear here. My appeal today is not to this assembly as a whole, but to each individual member of the Ramakrishna Mission. Organizations are good in so far as they protect and help the individuals to manifest their divinity. But they are a hindrance in so far as they rob individuals of their initiative and personal responsibility. The vital thing today is to keep alive the idea and the spirit of the human individual, of individual responsibility, and of creative work against the high tide of mechanization and centralized despotism which threaten to throttle the soul of man. Swamiji was fully alive to the need of organized activity when he said, 'To make a great future India, the whole secret lies in organization, accumulation of power, co-ordination of will. Being of one mind is the

secret of society.' But he was careful to add : 'It is character that pays everywhere.' 'The basis of all systems, social or political, rests upon the goodness of man. No nation is great or good because Parliament enacts this or that, but because its men are great and good.' My appeal, therefore, in the first instance, is not to the Ramakrishna Mission as a whole, but to its members as individuals. You should not lay the flatteringunction to your souls, 'the Mission is prospering and is doing all that is humanly possible. Of what avail is our little help?' On the contrary, you should ask yourselves when you sit in meditation, in your chapels, whether you have done your whole duty by the Mission and the poor, the ignorant, and the helpless for whose service the Mission stands. I do not deny that the Mission has worked creditably during its short life. But this is insignificant in comparison with the immense task set before us by Swamiji. We are

to change the outlook of the whole world by our practice as well as profession. The contrast between the prodigiousness of the task and the very little progress made thus far impels me to beseech you, with all the fervour I can command, to be up and doing, even at untold and unrecognized personal sacrifice, to prove yourselves worthy followers of Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji. Men, money, moral excellence, and spiritual inspiration—all are needed in this uphill task. No sacrifice can be too great, no offering can be too premature. I am sure, friends, that in asking you to do this, I do not ask too much, but only voice the feeling that is uppermost in your own minds. I cannot do better than conclude by putting you in mind of the inspiring words of Swamiji to his young disciples: 'I love you all ever so much, but I would wish to see you all die working for others.'

## A MEDIEVAL SAINT: DADU

BY SWAMI LOKESWARANANDA

Medieval India witnessed an interesting phenomenon : she saw for the first time an attempt—and a fairly successful attempt at that—at reconciliation between Hinduism and Islam. And oddly enough, this attempt was initiated not by intellectual India but by what may roughly be called India of the ignorant masses.

Before this, Hinduism and Islam were regarded as irreconcilable. They were like two poles asunder. To the Mussalmans Hinduism was mere idolatry, a mass of blind superstitions. Its ideals, its practices—everything was repugnant to them. It was the very contradiction of all they held dear and sacred in Islam. The Hindu reaction to Islam was of course a bit different. The Hindus have all along been tolerant. They have been used to all kinds of vagaries in the religious world. Within their own fold they have seen all manner of ideals and practices. They have not treated any with contempt. Far less have they tried to smother any. To them everything is welcome provided it originates from

a sincere and earnest quest for the truth. And they know they must allow for differences in tastes and temperaments. They do not treat religion like a strait jacket to pin down man to fixed beliefs and dogmas. This explains why there is this amazing diversity in the Hindu religious thought. Moreover through all this apparent diversity they try to seek a real unity. So they were not essentially hostile to Islam. Rather they were curious and interested. Here was a new pattern of religious thought and they wanted to examine it and see if there was anything in it they could accept with profit. In course of time perhaps they would have absorbed and assimilated Islam as they have done myriads of such ideas and ideologies through countless ages. In that case the Mussalmans would have been today only another sect in the Hindu fold.

But this was not to be. Unfortunately—yes, unfortunately—Islam strode into India with the sword of a political conqueror. It did not come purely as a religious move-

ment. It came as an attack, an assault. It was an attack on the political integrity and the religious freedom of the Hindus. This fact made the whole of Islam suspect to the Hindus. And being politically conquered they could not but feel a sting of humiliation in accepting Islam. It hurt their pride. Hence, though so unlike themselves, they assumed an attitude of sullen indifference; they would have no truck with it. And to prevent defections they hardened the caste rules and made social ostracism the price of accepting Islam. Almost an unprecedented step in Hindu history, and how deplorable!

Thus a barrier came to be established between the Hindus and the Mussalmans. It did not of course extend so far as to make social intercourse impossible between the two communities. Also it did not deter their representative theologians from engaging now and then in healthy debates under the auspices of Moghul courts. And true to the Indian traditions these debates were always characterized by an atmosphere of friendship and good humour. Nevertheless the barrier remained and the idea persisted that Hinduism and Islam were fundamentally different, nay, even antagonistic to each other and reconciliation between them was thought impossible.

Against this background of religious conflicts and confusions appeared a great mystic who addressed himself to the task of bridging the gulf between Hinduism and Islam and also partially succeeded. This was Dadu. Born a Mussalman he accepted a Hindu as his guru. By this very fact he brought Islam and Hinduism nearer to each other. He practised a religion which did not answer to any rigid type. It was neither Islam nor Hinduism. It was something constituting the common core of both. It was the essence of religion.

It was his chief endeavour to synthesize, to harmonize all religious views. This he did by emphasizing that the contents of all religious ideals were the same though their forms differed. To him 'Hindu' and 'Mussalman' were arbitrary and artificial labels and they surely had no sanction from God. When accused of breaking down the barriers between the Hindus and the Mussalmans his emphatic reply was that such barriers had no right to exist, for man was the same man

everywhere and God the same God in every religion and there was no sense in creating barriers among men which, far from helping, hindered their progress towards God. To him religion was intensely personal and it must vary according to individual tastes and requirements.

It was more by conduct, by his own personal example, than by his teachings, that he brought about a reconciliation between Hinduism and Islam. Religious disputes arise when the fundamentals of religion are forgotten. Dadu stressed as well as embodied these fundamentals. And what are they? They are: God alone matters and nothing else. And to attain Him what is necessary is love and sincere longing of the heart. Quarrels about creeds and dogmas are foolish; they are the idle sport of intellectual fools. Dadu himself is the best example of all these. He is the example of a man attaining to the highest spiritual grandeur aided solely by the devotions of a longing heart. For his was an approach to God not through the devious ways of scholarship, not through dry contentions of intellectualism, but through a burning faith, through an all-devouring love.

Details about Dadu's origin are a matter of dispute. Many stories are current and it is difficult to tell which are correct and which are not. Nevertheless it is fairly established that he was born of a poor Mohammedan family somewhere in the forties of the sixteenth century and by caste he was a cobbler. As a boy he showed nothing remarkable, nothing that bore any promise of what he was to be in future; he was like any other boy of his station. At the age of eleven he met in his village Buddhan (Bridhananda), a Hindu monk of Kabir's school, and this marked the turning-point of his life. Evidently Buddhan was able to see into the tremendous possibilities of the boy and was impressed; so he singled him out from among a host of other boys and taking him aside instructed him about God.

What exactly he told him we do not know, nor how Dadu reacted to it. We do not know also how Dadu passed the next seven years before Buddhan visited him again. Outwardly, it is possible, he simply drudged at his family trade as he had been doing before; but, inwardly, it may be presumed, the seed planted by Buddhan in his

heart must have been growing, drawing nourishment from those hidden sources of which only Buddhan was aware. So that by the time Buddhan came again, he was ready in his own conscious mind to take a real plunge into spiritual life. Buddhan, too, must have been waiting for this happy development and when he came again, he lost no time to give Dadu fuller instructions about God and to introduce him to the secrets of the esoteric life according to his school. And we know what was Dadu's reaction this time: as soon as Buddhan left, Dadu discovered he could not live the life he was so long living—the life of a petty workman earning an honest pie and being content with it. He felt a call—an irresistible call, the same to which many have succumbed, beginning with Buddha. This made him throw down his tools, snap all ties with the family and rush out into the big wide world in quest of truth. Roaming about ceaselessly he visited innumerable places and wherever he was he took care to contact sages of different cults and to study their ways. He was like an ever thirsty traveller drinking at whatever fountains he met on the way.

He was equally at home with the Hindus as well as the Mohammedans, with the Shâktas as well as the Vaishnavas, with the Buddhists as well as the Jains. He was like a sturdy plant thriving alike in all climates. He, however, did not commit himself to any particular creed or dogma. For he had no use for any man-made institution. Nor was he to be bound down by any fixed belief or custom. He was a true universalist that accepted everything and rejected nothing. Nevertheless he believed in one God-head and in the ultimate identity of the individual soul with that God-head. In this he was on a par with the Vedantist.

How Dadu acquired such broadness of outlook it is difficult to say. Of course Kabir to whose school his guru belonged and who influenced him more than any other single individual, held similar views. Still they were not so pronounced in their comprehensiveness and width of vision. It must have been Dadu's own intuitive experience of truth coupled with wide travels and close observation that lent such catholicity to his character. He brought about a synthesis not only between Hinduism and Islam but also among other warring creeds of the time.

And this he did not by a process of mere juxtaposition or that more grandiosely called eclecticism but by realizing as well as upholding that common truth underlying all the varying creeds and by emphasizing the organic harmony, that naturally exists between them. It is a great thing to do at any time and it is wonderful Dadu did it as early as the sixteenth century.

At the end of his long itinerary we find Dadu settled somewhere in Rajputana. He had married some time or other and here he lived a quiet life with his wife and children. A quiet life but not too quiet, for Dadu's fame soon spread far and wide and people began to flock to him in numbers. He received all with equal courtesy and tried to solve their doubts. Some came to test and some to tease only, but Dadu was unruffled and they went away tremendously impressed. Some, again, came to tempt or to threaten, but Dadu went on, unswayed, with his teaching of the truth and guiding the genuine seekers. Hindus as well as Mohammedans came and sat at his feet and many became his ardent followers. Among his visitors were common men as well as royalties, and among the latter there was Akbar the Great himself. And how interesting reads the story of his interview with Akbar! It reveals the characteristic qualities of both the great souls and it is a matter fit to be recorded in some detail.

Dadu, emperor of the spiritual world, is in his ramshackle house surrounded by his admirers. A messenger from Akbar, the biggest emperor of the temporal world of the time, arrives to say that Dadu is wanted. 'The Emperor wants me? What have I to do with him—I, a poor fakir? Excuse me, I can't go.' This was Dadu's reply. No sign of elation at such an unexpected honour, no indecent hurry to oblige the emperor!

Soon the messenger comes again. This time he knows better what to say. He says the emperor wants to meet him because he wants to profit by having a religious talk with him. So will he please accept the invitation? Dadu replied he would, but he could not go and meet the emperor in Delhi. His significant excuse was that he lived in a world altogether different from the emperor's and if he went to the emperor's world, he would not be himself any longer. To this Akbar sent a clever reply, full of understand-

ing, full of that nobility of spirit of which only he was capable. He said it was not his intention that Dadu should go to Delhi. He had sense enough to understand how foolish it would be to take him out of his environment. It would be like taking a piece of rock from the Himalayas and trying to judge their beauty and grandeur from it. But it was, at the same time, Akbar's misfortune that he was an emperor. If he went to Dadu's place, a whole host of ministers and courtiers would then rush to the place and defile its simple native beauty. So would he mind coming over to Fatehpur-Sikri, that city which Akbar meant to be a seat of deep spirituality? Fatehpur-Sikri suited Dadu quite well for he would often go to places around it, and he readily agreed. Accordingly, the time and place were fixed for the meeting.

They met in the quiet deserts outside the city and they met for forty days! It was like two master minds closed in grips with each other. They discussed almost everything bearing on spiritual life and they differed and argued and fought. Together they journeyed far into the spiritual realm, Dadu guiding and Akbar always doubting, questioning and challenging. It is well-known that Akbar, though illiterate, was a profound student of philosophy and was himself a mystic of a sort. His thirst for knowledge was great and he was no bigot to refuse to add to his knowledge from new or even from alien sources. It is this fact that explains why he felt impelled to seek an interview with Dadu, and to secure it he would let no false prestige stand in the way.

In the discussions that took place Dadu must have been impressed by his keen intellect, his deep understanding as well as his wide range of vision, and he must have felt glad at heart to be able to share his spiritual knowledge with him. Akbar, too, with his shrewd understanding of what was genuine and what was spurious, must have been struck by the rich contents of Dadu's spiritual experience, his great wisdom, his catholicity and, above all, his wonderful synthesis of all seemingly antagonistic and contradictory creeds and dogmas. And he drank in his words instinct with the living experience of reality. When, in course of discussions, Dadu incidentally pointed out to him that no creed, however perfect and com-

prehensive, can embody the full truth, 'just as no bird can contain in its beak the whole of sea-water', it must have given Akbar the shock of a new discovery and in this perhaps lies a partial explanation of that large-hearted toleration which characterized Akbar's treatment towards religions supposed to be hostile to Islam.

At last they parted and they parted the best of friends. Each conceived great admiration for the other and their exchange of ideas continued from a distance. It is difficult to say what influence Dadu had on Akbar. Who knows if his deep indrawn moods, his religious ecstasies and his increased abhorrence of bigotry which were all so prominent a characteristic of Akbar's last days were not the outcome of his contact with Dadu?

Dadu founded a sect named after Brahma and its chief articles of faith were : conquest of ego, prayer, indifference to conditions of body and mind, and love for all. It was a truly non-sectarian sect, for it was open to all and it preached and practised nothing with the least hint of narrowness of outlook. It had on its rolls Hindus as well as Mohammedans, and all enjoyed equal rights, and there was no question of change of religion on the part of those who sought its membership. It was not intended to replace any existing religious ideology but to supplement it, to broaden it, and to free it from all tendencies to collectivize everything stultifying the individual taste and requirement. It did not enjoin any complex rituals and ceremonies or anything tending to interfere with normal pursuits of life. It left every individual free to choose his own mode of approach to God, laying down the only condition that he should not infringe the articles of faith quoted above.

By necessity, but one would like to believe more by choice, Dadu did all his teaching through the popular dialect of Hindi. Among his disciples were men who were deep scholars of Sanskrit; still Hindi continued to receive special preference and thanks to this, Dadu's spiritual wisdom did not become a close preserve of the learned and its wide diffusion among the masses became possible. In addition, his disciples translated many Sanskrit books into Hindi in order that common folks might derive their benefit. It was, in short, the interest of the common folks that was always put in the forefront and in

every sense the movement became a real people's movement.

Another feature of the movement was that, besides Dadu, it drew inspiration from various saints, ancient or contemporary, and it became a sort of common pool to which all sects of all religions contributed their share. The idea was to help man advance in his spiritual struggles and not to create a hard crystallized sect centring round a particular personality or principle, so that, rather than co-operate, it would compete with the innumerable sects already existing. That is why sayings of saints belonging to different sects were carefully collected, preserved, and read with the same respect as Dadu's own sayings in the monasteries dedicated to him.

Names of Dadu's prominent disciples are on record and they include both Hindus and Mohammedans. His own son, Garibdas, was a disciple and, after Dadu's passing away at an approximate age of sixty, it was he who was chosen leader of the movement. Some of his disciples were brilliant men, and their gifted writings greatly influenced the religious thoughts of the time. It must be said to the credit of Dadu's disciples that, unlike

what has happened in the case of most saints, they did not tamper with his utterances trying to improve upon them or to suit them more to the popular taste. Not only that; they also remained loyal to their spirit and tried to live up to them.

As time passed, the movement gathered in volume and more and more men came under its influence. As Dadu's catholic ideas seeped into popular minds, the old atmosphere of religious rivalry disappeared and a general sense of understanding and sympathy towards religions other than one's own became wide-spread and habitual with the people. Partly because of its catholicity and partly because it had fulfilled its purpose, the movement lost its distinctive role and eventually disappeared. The services rendered by it and its originator, Dadu, can never be overrated for if, until recent times, relations between Hindus and Mohammedans or between one sect and another, Hindu or Mohammedan, have been friendly and sympathetic, it can be safely concluded that it has been largely due to Dadu and his movement.\*

\* Largely based on Prof. Kshiti Mohan Sen's *Dadu*.

## RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA

By R. E. R. LEES, I.P.S.

It is only just over one hundred years ago that Ramakrishna was born, which is a short time relative to the many centuries that have elapsed since earliest civilized times. Thus the memory of him is still fresh and his teaching remains unclouded by theories and quarrels of theologians. Although his disciples have all since died, disciples of his disciples live today, who can give us true, untarnished accounts of his personality, his preaching, and his daily life, instilling the breath of life into reverence of him and discussion on his teaching, his philosophy, and his divine inspiration. Ramakrishna was a man uncontaminated by the worldly things that constituted the world of his time. His life was a great demonstration that even in this age, so cluttered with evil and with the unnatural effects of industrialization and financial dependency, divine realization can be attained by one whose reli-

gious devotion is sincere and whole-hearted. Any one who has heard or read of his life and teachings is impressed above all by the directness and simpleness of his philosophy and the broad and completely unsectarian spirit which pervades it. The life of Ramakrishna has thrown new light on many principles of religious thought and practices, but he is and always will be associated primarily with the manner in which he fought against sectarian doctrines and dogmas, and taught that all religions are but paths that lead to realization of the infinite force behind all creation viz. God. In the attainment of this end Ramakrishna himself followed in turn the practices of all religions and found that they all led him to God-consciousness, and through each he could attain *samadhi*.

Can his religious philosophy be of use in this present modern world? Is it practicable

enough to be of use to us who are entangled in a world more divorced from religion than ever before by the results of our own material creations? The answer can be found in Ramakrishna's own reply when he was asked whether God-realization could come without giving up the things of the world. He replied : 'You do not have to give up everything. You are better off where you are. By living in the world you are enjoying the taste of both the pure crystallized sugar and of the molasses with all its impurities. You are indeed better off. Verily I say unto you, you are living in the world, there is no harm in that; but you will have to fix your mind on God; otherwise, you cannot realize him. Work with one hand and hold the feet of the Lord with the other. When you have finished your work, hold His feet to your heart with both your hands.' This was an allegorical utterance, but how fine a thought and how simply it can be fitted into the everyday life of any one of us. The simpleness of Ramakrishna's teaching is one of its most appealing aspects. Here was not an intellectual speaking with the voice of abstruse intellectuality but a man expressing basic religious principles in language a child could understand and illustrating them with parables taken from everyday things and occurrences to impress them on our minds. His teachings were not the impracticable dreams of a visionary but suited to this world of turmoil, a balm to any troubled heart ready to listen and assimilate his truths. And all the way through his philosophy was the underlying principle of toleration and understanding. His very thesis of unity of religions in itself is a philosophy of toleration. And without a spirit of toleration the world of tomorrow will be as full of wars and bloodshed as is the world of today. This is one of the most important practical lessons which can be learnt by reading of Ramakrishna.

The present-day manner of living has tended to make modern man less God-conscious. We live, especially in large towns, surrounded on all sides by things of our own creation and are dependent so much on all the effects of industrialization that we become unmindful of the world forces under which we live. It is only at times of extreme peril or great unhappiness, when modern inventions are of no use, that the large majority of people turn to God, sceptically maybe, but as a

last resort, and pray to HIm for assistance. This spirit is even more common in Western countries where industrialization has reached greater heights than in this country. Here the countryside still predominates and the vast majority of people still live by tilling the land, still live in daily contact with the natural bounties of God. To that portion of the world sunk in materialization the call of Ramakrishna comes as a beacon of hope and freedom from the bondage of material dependency. It may be noticed that Ramakrishna was directly influenced by beauty of nature and would plunge into *samadhi* on seeing a beautiful or colourful scene or landscape. This inspiration to God-realization is present for each and every one of us if we open our eyes and mind to it. The call to realize God through the visual signs of the world forces that surround us, is a means of salvation to mortals bound to the earth by materialism. In a delightful and imaginative book, written by Algernon Blackwood, the thoughts of a visionary on reading a leader in a newspaper were expressed as follows :

The pompous flatulence of the language touched bathos. He thought of the thousands who had read both columns and preened themselves upon that leader. He thought how they would pride themselves upon the latest contrivance for speeding their inert bodies from one point to another 'annihilating distance'; upon being able to get from suburbs to the huge shops that created artificial wants, then filled them; from the poky villas, with their wee sham gardens, to the dingy offices; from dark airless East End rooms to countless factories that pour out semi-fraudulent unnecessary wares upon the world, explosives and weapons to destroy another nation, or cheapjack goods to poison their own—all in a few minutes less than they could do it a week before. And then he thought of the leisure of the country folk and of those who knew how to be content without external possessions, to watch the sunset and the dawn with hearts that sought realities; sharing the noble slowness of the seasons, the gradual growth of flowers, trees, and crops, the unhurried dignity of Nature's grand procession, the repose in-progress of the Mother Earth.

It is this direct call to the opening of one's mind to the forces of nature, to the world force which we call God, to which all may resort whether overburdened by worldly duties, whether sick or in poverty, whether weak or strong, which is one of the strongest appeals of the teachings of Ramakrishna.

One word concerning the terrible world war in which we are engulfed today. Had Ramakrishna been alive he would have believed that it is by divine will that we are forced

to fight, that evil must be combated so that finally good and the forces of God will be free to reign in the world. This is expressed by a modern English poet who wrote :

'He who has lost soul's liberty  
Concerns himself for ever with his  
property,  
As, when folk have lost both dance  
and song,  
Women clean useless pots the whole day  
long.  
Thank God for war and fire  
To burn the silly objects of desire,  
That from the ruin of a church thrown down  
We see God clear and high above the town.'

God-consciousness and realization is what Ramakrishna can teach us, whether we be Muslim, Hindu, Christian, or of any other religious denomination. Sri Aurobindo finished one of his smaller works with the following words, and this cannot be better ended than with them.

The goal marked out for us is not to speculate about these things, but to experience them. The call upon us is to grow into the image of God, to dwell in Him and with Him and be a channel of His joy and might and an instrument of His works. Purified from all that is evil, transfigured in soul by His touch, we have to act in the world

as dynamos of that divine electricity and send it thrilling and radiating through mankind, so that wherever one of us stands hundreds around may become full of His light and force, full of God and full of *ananda*. Churches, orders, theologies, and philosophies have failed to save mankind because they have busied themselves with intellectual creeds, dogmas, rites, and institutions, with *achara*, *shudhi*, and *durshana*, as if these could save mankind, and have neglected the one thing needful, the power and purification of the soul. We must go back to the one thing needful, take up again Christ's gospel of the purity of mankind, Mohammed's gospel of perfect submission, self-surrender, and servitude to God, Chaitanya's gospel of the perfect love and joy of God in man, Ramakrishna's gospel of the unity of all religions and the divinity of God in man, and, gathering all these streams into one mighty river, one purifying and redeeming Ganges, pour it over the death-in-life of a materialistic humanity as Bhagiratha led down the Ganges and flooded it with the ashes of his fathers, so that there may be a resurrection of the soul in mankind and the *Satya Yuga* for a while return to the world. Nor is this the whole object of the *Lila* or the *Yoga*; the reason for which the Avatars descend is to raise up man again and again, developing in him a higher and ever higher humanity, a greater and yet greater development of divine being, bringing more and more of heaven again and again upon the earth until our toil is done, our work accomplished and *sachchidananda* fulfilled in all even here, even in this material universe. Small is his work, even if he succeeds, who labours for his own salvation or the salvation of a few; infinitely great is his even if he fail or succeed only partially or for a season, who lives only to bring about peace of soul, joy, purity, and perfection among all mankind.

## MONOTHEISM AND POLYTHEISM

BY PROF. ABINASHI CHANDRA BOSE, M.A., PH.D.

### I. MONOTHEISM

It is usual to consider monotheism as a form of faith superior to polytheism. In fact some have formulated the view, in accordance with the theory of progress, that polytheism perfects itself into monotheism, - that men start by believing in many gods, but finally come to the conclusion that there is only one God. A close examination, however, of the two rival cults from the point of view of practical religion and not of abstract thought, and a comparative estimate of the principles on which they are based, will go to prove that the usual view held about them is not quite accurate; that polytheism and monotheism as religious faiths are not really inferior and superior stages of theism, but two different modes of

approach to the divine idea. It will appear that they represent two different patterns of thought.

Let us consider primarily the simple proposition that the difference between polytheism and monotheism is that the former believes in many gods and the latter in one God. A little thought will show that the difference is not one of number only.

First, monotheism is the belief in a personal God. Hence one who believes in an impersonal Divine Being is not a monotheist in the technical sense of the term. Those who quote the famous *Rigvedic* verse that says that 'the One Being the sages call by' many names' do not sufficiently realize that here 'the One Being' (*ekam sad*) is in the neuter, standing for the Divine Essence

and not for a Divine Person and hence is not the same as contemplated by monotheism. *To the monotheistic creeds, God is a Person and not a metaphysical Essence.*

*Secondly*, as a Person the monotheistic Divinity cannot be of either sex. He must be male. One who accepts a Single Divinity as Mother or Maiden is not a monotheist in the practical sense of the term. Thus to the monotheist the Divinity is not only a Single Person, but also a male Person. *Therefore the distinction between Monotheism and Polytheism is not one of number only but of gender also.*

*Thirdly*, the monotheistic Deity who is a male Person cannot be a Person of any age. He cannot, for example, be addressed as a Child—as the *Rigvēda* addresses its Deity in one or two places: 'The hymns kiss the Child, worthy of Laudation'—*shishum rihanti matayah panipnatam*—Rig., ix. 85, 11; or He cannot be addressed as a youth (The Veda addresses Indra as 'the youthful friend'—*yuvā sakħā*). *The monotheistic Deity is not only a Person, and a male Person but must be conceived as an Elderly Person.*

*Fourthly*, as an Elderly Person, the monotheistic Deity cannot be made to stand in any relation to man. He can be addressed only as a Father. One would not be a monotheist if he were to think of his God as a brother or any other relative. Supposing Agni in the following Vedic verse stands for the ultimate Being, He would not be the typical monotheistic God, because the relations in which he stands to man are more than one—

*agnim mange pitaram agnim āpim  
agnim bhrātaram sadamit sakħāyam*

(Rig., vii. 7. 8.)

'Agni I deem my Father, my Kinsman, I deem Him my Brother, my Friend—

for ever.'

*Thus the monotheistic God should be conceived not only as a Person and a male and Elderly Person, but also a Father.*

*Fifthly*, the monotheistic Deity cannot exist anywhere. He has His special abode—heaven. He is the Father who is in heaven. He may go wherever he likes, but heaven is the place of divine residence. \*

This conception has far-reaching implications. Perhaps this makes the most essential

difference between monotheism and polytheism; that *monotheism contemplates the Divine in Heaven and polytheism the Divine in the universe.*

In monotheism God and man belong to two entirely different planes: God is holy, man is sinful. But in polytheism there is but a thin dividing line between the Divine and the human, the immortal and the mortal. The human may become the divine, the mortal the immortal.

*Sixthly*, the monotheistic Deity is not only a Father, who lives in heaven, but a Father who rules from heaven—a Divine Patriarch. The relation in which He stands to man is that of a Monarch to whom all homage is due. Hence the worship of the monotheistic Deity reproduces the technique of honouring the monarch—of bending and bowing, kneeling and prostrating to Him. The regularization of such acts at stated hours or days is in keeping with the periodical demonstration of loyalty to the monarch. *Thus monotheism is monarchical theism.*

The whole ideology of monotheism is based on the conception of monarchy. It makes a theocracy. Heaven is the royal abode of God where He, the king, sits on His throne. Innumerable servants carry out His orders. He sends his messengers, appoints vicegerents. He takes the best of His subjects to His heavenly court. The worst of them are flung into the dark prison-house, hell.

As king He claims unstinted allegiance and homage. The subjects must offer their respects publicly and ceremonially to satisfy His royal position. They must stand in dread of Him. He cannot be spoken of lightly.

*Seventhly*, the monotheistic Deity is not only a Monarch, but, being a single Deity, is an Absolute Monarch. In the typically monotheistic creeds, God, the only Monarch, is without a rival; and every earthly being is His sole subject. *Here monotheism adds the idea of imperialism to that of kingship.* Being the only Ruler, the king of heaven is jealous of rivals. He alone should receive the homage and no other. To offer homage to any but the God of Heaven is to be unfaithful to the king. No wonder that the worshippers of the monotheistic Divinity thought that nothing could please the

Monarch better than to subdue and destroy those who offered their homage and worship to persons or objects other than this Imperial Ruler, the God of heaven. The Pharaoh Ikhnaton, the founder of monotheism in ancient Egypt, seems to have thought that just as he, by conquering a number of tracts, became their emperor by eliminating their local rulers, so should the God he worshipped become the only object of worship for all his conquered peoples to the exclusion of their local deities.

*Eighthly*, the monarchical conception of the King of Heaven has carried with it the idea of the perpetual Enemy to Him, of the anti-God or Satan (Hebrew for 'adversary') who is constantly engaged in tampering with the loyalty of the subjects of the Divine Monarch.

This has led to another idea, very far-reaching in its consequence. A man who did not believe in the God of Heaven was considered to be not only a non-believer and atheist, but, according to the conception of the anti-God, a person under the influence of God's enemy, and therefore a traitor for whom no punishment was too severe. Hence lies the explanation for the monotheistic conceptions of the infidel—the man of another religion, and of the heretic—the man who did not accept the monotheistic faith in its entirety. Modern people, especially those accustomed to philosophical religions based on thought and not belief, often wonder why there should be such intolerance in respect of intellectual persuasion or opinion—as to whether there is a God in Heaven or there is not; why men should be severely punished for conduct not involving moral turpitude. But according to the fundamental monotheistic conception, *non-belief or non-conformity is the greatest moral turpitude, because it is alignment with Satan, the Supreme Power of wickedness*. It was not only in medieval times that people like Galileo were persecuted for their opinion, but only about a hundred and fifty years ago, a great seat of learning like Oxford University expelled the poet Shelley and his companion for holding the opinion that God was a Power pervading the universe and not a Person living in Heaven.

*Ninthly*, the conception of the God in Heaven who is the Absolute Monarch ruling over the earth has led to another development. How to know that there is a God

living in heaven and what is His will that everybody must obey at the risk of His terrible displeasure? This question has led to the idea of the prophet as originally and literally understood. A prophet is a man who has come into contact with the God of Heaven, and been authorized by Him to declare His will. Hence in monotheism the ideas of God and the prophet—the human agent employed by the Divinity to communicate with mankind—are closely associated. *God is as His Prophet has reported Him to be*. None but those authorized by God can declare His will. Any view about God's will not based upon the prophet's report is spurious. Thus, for monotheism, the basis of religion is provided by the records left by the prophet about his communications with the Divine—what is technically called revelation. These records make the scripture. Again, monotheism accepts the interpretation of the scripture made by religious leaders. Such literature makes what is known as theology. Theology has not considered any question in the abstract, or independently (as philosophy does); it has depended upon what it has taken as fact. For example, theology would not entertain the question whether God can come on a mountain to meet a man and give a tablet to him; it will not allow any metaphysical discussion regarding the nature of the Divinity and the possible ways of its manifestation; it will stick to what it believes to be fact—that God did come and meet Moses and give him a tablet, and it will require others to accept the belief in an unquestioning way, because the authority on which the belief is based is, in its opinion, quite infallible.

Theology, then, does not keep any question open. It gives its definite opinion on things and wants it to be accepted without question. Thus monotheism demands belief: it rises or falls with the documents called the scripture and the interpretation of them offered by theology. Holding such a view monotheism quite naturally opposes science and logic. Monotheisms have set their prophets above scientists and philosophers.

But they have not unanimously accepted the prophets. It is found that the followers of earlier prophets have not accepted the later.

Two attitudes are in evidence in monotheistic creeds regarding one another. One, found in the older creeds, refuses to accept the prophet of later religions: hence, to them, a new monotheism is a pretence—a case of heresy. Such was the view held about Christianity by Judaism, about Islam by Christianity, and about Bahaism by Islam. Another attitude, found in the newer creeds, is that while the old prophets are recognized, the new prophet is held to be a truer interpreter of the existence of the one Divine Being than the older prophets were. Thus though formally accepted, the older prophets are held to have only prepared the way for the newer. This view is almost as unacceptable to the older monotheisms as theirs is to the newer monotheisms.

Tenthly, a literal acceptance of the necessity of belief, which must be enforced to the exclusion of reason or knowledge, requires an agency to ensure such enforcement. Hence monotheism must build an *institution* that should control the daily life of its followers. This institution took a theocratic form. It was designed to be a world-state with the Representative of the Divinity—the Pope or Khalifa—at its head. Hence, owing to the imperialist idea taking a simple political form, monotheism worked with a definite programme of world subordination. Though the modern age and its growing secularism have dismissed the ideal as unnatural and undesirable, it still fires the imagination of certain ‘religious’ people (according to monotheistic ideology), especially those who are in the back-waters of modern life.

At any rate there are people following monotheistic faiths who find that their religion cannot flourish unless it is a state reli-

gion. The movement for the disestablishment of the State Church has not received adequate support in every country. In India we find fresh attempts being made by followers of monotheistic Islam to establish a State on the basis of their religion.

On the other hand polytheism has flourished through private enterprise and without the backing of the political power. It certainly demonstrated great vitality where, as in India, it could survive not only without a State, but even under a monotheistic government; and preserved itself with no power at its back except private devotion and private propaganda.

From the facts stated above, it becomes evident that the logic of the monotheistic position, taken in its entirety, is such that only one monotheistic creed can exist at a time. When two monotheistic creeds come into existence, with different prophets for them, and different reports (i.e. scriptures) regarding the King of Heaven, it is discovered that actually they speak about two different Gods, with different heavens for their abodes. In other words, a plurality of monotheistic creeds, though theoretically attached to one God, really means a state of competition between a number of rivals for the single God-head; and when each monotheism attempts to found a world-state, subjugating others, the position becomes even more acute. Thus the irresistible conclusion is that even ideologically monotheism can remain true to its name only when there is one creed professing the doctrine. (We speak here of monotheism as a religious creed and not as the philosophical contemplation of a Single Divine Power.)

(To be concluded)

Be bold! My children should be brave, above all. Not the least compromise on any account. Preach the highest truths broadcast. Do not fear of losing your respect, or of causing unhappy friction. Rest assured that if you serve truth in spite of temptations to forsake it, you will attain a heavenly strength, in the face of which men will quail to speak before you things which you do not believe to be true. People would be convinced of what you would say to them, if you can strictly serve truth for fourteen years continually without swerving from it.

—Swami Vivekananda

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

We draw our readers' attention particularly to *The Ramakrishna Mission : Its Ideal and Objects* by the President of the Math and Mission. It contains an inspiring and timely reminder to all not to rest on their oars but to go ahead and 'stop not till the goal is reached'. *A Medieval Saint : Dadu* is a description of a great soul who carried religion into practice in his life. *Monotheism and Polytheism* will be found interesting and instructive.

### UPLIFT OF BACKWARD COMMUNITIES

Presiding over the anniversary of the Madras Social League, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Dewan of Travancore, advised social workers to effect a real change of heart in working for the uplift of the backward communities. He was of the opinion that the social and economic disabilities placed upon the backward classes by the high caste members of society were equivalent to sin for which the latter had to make full amends. The only proper amends, he felt, was to better the lot of the sufferers and to remove the evil of untouchability through active social work. But treating the depressed classes in a condescending manner, with occasional offers of economic advantages, will not bring the desired amount of success. As the Dewan has rightly put it, such work has to be carried on not by mere gifts, though they were useful in the present economic plight, but by a change of heart and spirit—a spirit which should be willing not to be patronizing but to be brotherly and sisterly towards others.

Hindu society has to rid itself of the bane of untouchability as quickly as possible. It is highly regrettable to find some sections of orthodox Hindus still unwilling to realize the immense harm it has done to the Hindu community as a whole. Deploring such callousness and lack of understanding of the spirit of Hinduism, Sj. Nalini Ranjan Ghosh, Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha Conference, made a stirring appeal to all Hindus to unite in abolishing untouchability. He had no doubt that untouchability stood as a

stumbling block in the path of Hindu consolidation. Moreover it has given a handle to antagonists of Hindu solidarity who are trying to drive a wedge between the higher castes and a large section of the illiterate masses and thus alienate the latter. He further observed :

We are to remember that more often than not the insults that come from outside come through the loop-holes that are our own creation . . . The so-called depressed classes or rather some of them have certain social disabilities. But they surely would have been eliminated in a natural way with the progress of society. . . . We cannot assimilate, but we do know how to reject and excommunicate. But this was not the spirit of India.

We are glad to note that, owing to the untiring efforts of Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, the Government of Travancore have introduced the temple-entry reform, and have offered help and encouragement to members of the backward communities in the shape of scholarships to students, well-established colonies with temples and tanks, and employment for the landless or homeless. Every true and enlightened Hindu will be grateful to the able Dewan of Travancore for his laudable attempt to eradicate the blot of untouchability from the Hindu escutcheon. The uplift of the depressed classes and the removal of untouchability were strongly advocated by Swami Vivekananda who held that unless the practice of untouchability disappeared there was no way to India's regeneration.

### COMMUNAL AMITY

As the destinies of the two great communities of India are closely linked together, the necessity for mutual understanding between Hindus and Muslims need hardly be emphasized. Speaking on communal unity at a meeting in Calcutta, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu said :

Today, we in India should follow the example of mutual readjustment on the basis of mutual reverence and mutual right. We must understand our responsibilities as Indians or as Muslims, but let us not be exclusive because we differ from one another.

By their very nature individuals are constituted differently. Yet we co-operate and work together in harmony. Communal differences are not in essence so very

irreconcilable as they are made to appear today. There is an underlying unity permeating the whole of India notwithstanding the apparent diversities of caste, religion, or class. The attempts of some public men to make religious differences prominent in order to gain their political ends are deplorable, for they do more harm than good to the country as a whole. Exhorting the Muslims to be true to their religious ideals of equality and brotherhood of every man, she observed :

Man and man in India must work together not in mechanical uniformity but in the midst of diversity—that central quality of humanity.... We are all chasing after the illusion of power, and we have forgotten that power is unreal and inimical to us unless there is co-operation among all sections of the people.

Hindus have been a tolerant community, concerning themselves with keeping their higher spiritual values unsullied, while the followers of Islam have taken to aggressive conversion, their converts coming largely from the ranks of the Hindus. But in the interests of communal unity and national solidarity either community will do well to refrain from forcibly converting members of the other community. This form of religious zeal, though looked upon by some as not reprehensible, creates mutual distrust between the communities, and stands in the way of a real understanding. In the life of Sri Ramakrishna we find the verification of the truth that the best in each religion can be imbibed and assimilated without changing faith.

In addition to their dissensions arising from the external formalities of religion, Hindus and Muslims in India are confronted with the fantastic theory that they are two distinctly separate 'nations', having very little or nothing in common. History or sociology seems to lend scant support to such a claim, which appears most unsound from an economic or practical view-point. This view is shared by many distinguished Hindus and Muslims. Nawab Mirza Yar Jung Bahadur, Agent of the Nizam's Government at Nagpur, pointing out the dangers of division, said :

If religion is taken to be the basis of nationality, it will lead to absurd results. For example, if a Hindu who belongs to India for centuries changes his religion as a result of conversion, he will, by this rule, cease to be an Indian, which is absurd. Religion is no test of nationality.

He felt that any one who had settled down in India and made it his home was an Indian. It is very encouraging to find that there are many liberal minded Muslims like Mirza Yar Jung who consider themselves Indians. They always think in terms of unity and strive to bring about a communal rapprochement. The future of India depends largely on the friendliness and co-operation between the two communities. Hindus and Muslims will have to guard against disruptive influences, internal or external, which tend to incite mutual strife by raising unfounded apprehensions. The real teachings of the prophets and seers have to be re-interpreted in the light of changed conditions.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**INTRODUCTORY SYLLABUS OF LOGIC.** By R. M. MAZUMDAR. Published by Rupkatha Publishing House, 26, Saradar Sankar Road, Calcutta. Pp. 28. Price 12 As.

The book under review contains, as the title reveals, the fundamentals of the introductory portion of Logic, being a synopsis of Prof. Mazumdar's lectures to the Intermediate classes. Beginners generally find Logic rather a tough subject. The author has tried to lessen the difficulty of students by discussing the problems according to a new method.

**ICONOGRAPHY OF SRI VIDYARNAVA TANTRA.** By S. SRIKANTHA SASTRI. Available from R. Hari Rao, Cenotaph Road, Bangalore City. Pp. 46. Price R. 1.

*Vidyarnava Tantra* is a voluminous digest of many Tantras attributed to Vidyaranya whose

identity is still the subject matter of controversy. The learned author has discussed briefly the authorship and date of Vidyaranya by collecting together much of the available evidence from various sources. The images are analysed and arranged in a useful manner, closely following the text of the *Vidyarnava Tantra*. The images are described under separate groups such as the Shakta, Shaiwa, Vaishnava, Saura, Kaumara, and Ganapatya. The essential characteristics of each image are precisely pointed out. This small work, the result of detailed research by a scholar of repute, will serve as an excellent guide to students of Indian iconography in making a comparative study of the various Tantric texts.

**KALYANA KALPATARU.** (Cow NUMBER). Published by Gita Press, Gorakhpur. Pp. 88. Price Re. 1-8 As.

The 'Cow Number' of *Kalyana Kalpataru* for the month of January 1945 contains a number of contributions by well-known writers, each article presenting a particular aspect of the worth and usefulness of the cow. There are as many as fourteen illustrations, two of them coloured. The annual number of the *Kalyana Kalpataru* is always eagerly looked forward to by innumerable readers, and its special features are a treat. But for the fewer number of pages and illustrations, which is inevitable under the present conditions, this special edition of the journal leaves nothing to be desired.

### HINDI

**KALYAN.** (PADMAPURANAKA). Published by *Gita Press, Gorakhpur.* Pp. 360. Price Rs. 43 As.

We welcome this special, illustrated and enlarged, annual number of the well-known Hindi journal *Kalyan*. It contains the *Srishti-Khanda*, *Bhumi-Khanda*, and some portions of the *Svarga-Khanda* of the *Padmapurana*, translated into lucid Hindi, in an abridged form. In addition there are some illuminating articles on the greatness and philosophical significance of the *puranas*. Ten coloured illustrations and sixty-five line drawings form a special feature of this issue.

### BENGALI

**BENOY SARKARER BAITHAKE.** (IN MEETINGS WITH BENOY SARKAR). VOL. I. (SECOND AND ENLARGED EDITION). Published by *Chakravarty, Chatterjee & Co., Ltd.*, 15, College Square, Calcutta. Pp. 770. Price Rs. 6.

Benoy Sarkar is nothing if not original. He is original in everything—in his outlook, in his approach to problems, in his interpretations, in his expressions. And in being original he is sometimes almost heretical. But one thing is certain: you may not like his views, but you simply cannot help liking the man. His sincerity, his scholarship, his wide sympathies—all these compel respect and admiration.

He is a staunch nationalist. Few can compare with him in his passion for all that is good and great in the country. But happily his nationalist sentiments do not make him blind to the merits of other countries. In him nationalism is perfectly poised with internationalism. He is one of those few who are able to rise above the prejudices of race, religion, or country. To him the human spirit is the same everywhere, and he is for giving ready recognition to its achievements wherever they may be found. His wide travels, with eyes open and a mind free from all bias have convinced him that there are great souls, great institutions, and great ideals in every country, and he wants India to draw from them any inspiration, any guidance that they are capable of giving. He believes in free give and take of thoughts between India and other countries, and his is a typical Hindu attitude which never scorns to accept and assimilate anything new and good that others may have to offer.

It is these qualities that make not only Sarkar lovable but also all that he writes. Here, in this book, these qualities are in ample evidence,

though it is one dealing mainly with Bengal, the province of his birth. His pride in what Bengal has achieved during the past few decades is patent throughout the book. But when he appraises the achievements of other countries, there is no tinge of bias, and his praise and appreciation are most enthusiastic where they are deserved.

The book, novel in some respects, records Sarkar's views on varied topics. Being a popular teacher and an enthusiastic worker for every cause worthy of his support, he always attracts a large number of visitors. Some of them take the opportunity of their visits to ask him to expound his views on subjects in which they are interested. Six such visitors have compiled this book, each in a separate section. Visiting him at different periods and at different times, during the years from 1931 to 1944, they used to assail him with all manner of questions; and the brilliant sallies they evoked from Sarkar so impressed them that they thought it fit to put them on record. It is out of such records that the book has grown. It deals with almost every aspect of the renaissance-movements that Bengal has witnessed during the present century. This is what has led to the subtitle 'Vimsha-shatabdir Banga-samskriti.' One gets in it a vivid picture of those personalities and those movements that have shaped Bengal as she is today. There is so much valuable information in it—valuable and rare. And everything is correctly assessed and treated as it ought to be. Throughout, the book is marked with a penetrating analysis and a fair and sound judgement. Much credit is due to the questioners themselves, for they know what to ask and how to draw out Sarkar. And they do not cease questioning him until they are satisfied that they have had all that Sarkar has, to give. The talk is so interesting, so illuminating that one can never feel bored by it. Sarkar's views are remarkably fresh and full of suggestive value, so that even if one cannot accept them, one is bound, at least, to pause and consider them. And like so many other things about him, his language, too, is characteristically his own—extremely colloquial, full of new phrases and idioms, and always vigorous.

We shall be looking forward to the second volume of the book, which is to appear soon.

### HINDI-SANSKRIT

**ATMADARSHANAM.** BY PT. RAMANANDA SAHAI BRAHMAVIDYA. Available from the author, Mahajani Tola, Fyzabad. Pp. 134. Price Re. 1-4.

*Atmadarshanam* or 'The Philosophy of Self-revelation' is a well-compiled elementary treatise on Hindu philosophy, with Sanskrit text and Hindi commentary. The work is divided into four chapters, and the author has given apt quotations from well-known Hindu philosophical and mythological works in support of his textual exposition. The method followed is akin to other Vedantic *prakarana granthas*, and treats of the non-dual aspect of the Self. It will serve as an introductory book on Hindu philosophy, and will be welcomed by the Hindi-knowing public.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

#### REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1944

The Annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission was held at the Belur Math premises on the 30th March, 1943. The following is a brief report of the work done by the Mission during the year 1944.

**Centres :** There were altogether 182 centres, including 65 Math centres. Besides, there were 11 sub-centres. These centres served all without distinction of caste, creed or colour and preached non-sectarian religious principles.

The above centres and sub-centres conducted no less than 459 permanent activities of various types.

**Relief Work :** Distress Relief was carried on chiefly in Bengal and North Travancore. In Bengal, from 50 or more centres a maximum of 864 villages and 15 towns were served. Relief work was also carried on in the cyclone-affected areas of Midnapore. The materials distributed among the stricken people included 67,924 maunds of foodgrains, 83,107 pieces of cloth, 27,816 blankets, 13,989 shirts, 5,363 yards of shirting cloth and Rs. 16,165-2-3 in cash. Medical Relief was administered to 3,35,760 people suffering from Malaria and the after-effects of Malnutrition, and 9,01,129 patients, nursing mothers and children, were helped with special diet like milk, sugar, barley and multivitamin tablets. The total expenditure in cash on these relief operations was Rs. 4,44,542-6-3. Flood Relief was conducted by Bombay and Bhubaneswar branches.

To stabilize the disturbed state of labour post relief work was organized by many centres in Bengal. Carpenters, weavers, fishermen, etc., who had been thrown out of employment during the famine were reinstated in their work. Small cottage industries like paper making, cane-work, and smithy were introduced. Works of public utility such as road-laying and tank excavation were taken up, thus affording employment to the able-bodied unemployed.

Similar works of reconstruction were undertaken in North Travancore also. Spinning, weaving, and coir-making were introduced which gave employment to many people.

**Medical Work :** The Mission conducted 6 general and 2 maternity Hospitals, with a total of 488 beds. The total number of indoor cases was 10,138, and that of surgical cases including those

of the Eye Hospital at Brindaban, was 3,428. The 49 outdoor Dispensaries, including the T.B. Clinic at Delhi, and the Eye Clinic at Karachi treated in all 14,20,708 cases during the year.

**Educational Work :** Work under this head included 1 Residential College, 3 Residential High Schools, 25 Secondary Schools and 11 M. E. Schools, with a total of 6,849 boys and 3,802 girls; 55 Primary Schools with 2,178 boys and 1,446 girls; 16 Night Schools with 1,088 students, 4 Industrial Schools with 346 students, and two centres for technicians having 669 mechanics and electricians under training. The Mission had 33 Students' Homes, which accommodated 1,236 students. A large Orphanage has been started at Rabara, in 24 Parganas.

**Work among Women :** Under this head the Mission conducted the Women's Department of the Benares Home of Service, the Maternity Hospitals at Calcutta and Taki, the Widows' Home at Puri, the Women Invalids' Home at Benares, the Sarada Vidyalaya at Madras, the Sister Nivedita Girls' School at Calcutta, the Sarada Shiksha-Mandir at Sarisha (24-Parg.), and the Girls' Orphanage at Karatlu (Ceylon), etc.

**Uplift of Backward Classes and Areas :** The Ashrama at Khasia and Jaintia Hills and many other centres, both in rural and urban areas, served the masses in a variety of ways. Some of them organized tours with magic lanterns, gramophones, etc. The labouring classes in industrial areas had free access to the charitable dispensaries and hospitals as well as to the primary and night schools, some of which were specially conducted for them.

**Spread of Culture and Spiritual Ideas :** Almost all centres conducted libraries and reading rooms and organized public lectures and classes. The Mission's monastic workers made contacts with distinguished scholars of foreign lands and carried the universal message of Vedanta to distant shores.

**Foreign Work :** In U. S. A., Argentina, England, Mauritius, etc., the Mission carried on its cultural activities through 17 centres.

**Finance :** The Total receipts of the Mission in 1944 were Rs. 36,57,653-3-10 and the total disbursements Rs. 36,27,874-5-11.

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. L

JUNE, 1945

No. 6



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निवोधत ।”

“Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI SHIVANANDA

BELUR MATH, SEPTEMBER 1930

Afternoon. It is raining cats and dogs. Mahapurush Maharaj is in his room, sitting. Two devotees connected with a well-known organization of Bengal have been waiting for a long time to have an interview. Because of his failing health interviews have been very much restricted. At last they are taken to him. Paying their respects to him, they say: 'Maharaj, we want some spiritual advice. You are a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. Please bless us. And if you give us leave, we would like to ask a few questions.'

Maharaj: 'Certainly. Ask freely.'

One of the devotees: 'Sri Ramakrishna came down to the earth in human form for the good of the world. While in the physical body he got together his intimate disciples and handed over to them as a legacy all his spiritual force. The organization that sprang up thus is still functioning. What we want to know is this: How did he bring them together? What ties did he forge that kept them together?'

Maharaj: 'Love is the only tie. He bound us together with the tie of love. Each of us went to him being drawn by his love. His love charmed us and gathered us round

him, one after another. Such was his love that, compared with it, the love of parents or dear relatives seemed nothing. Even now love governs his organization. Love is the common cord that holds all of us together.'

Devotee: 'But time is wearing out and will continue to wear out that love-force with which Thakur bound you together and which he transmitted to you. The question is: How to preserve that love-force intact? How to keep it uninterrupted and unimpaired for a long time for the good of the world?'

Maharaj: 'Well, nothing in this world is permanent. No force is ever the same. Do you know how it works? Exactly like a wave. It has a wave-like motion. Now it surges up with force; next it sinks slowly. This has been the case always. And the sinking presages an upward surge that is to follow. How is man to know the secret of keeping the force intact? Only Mother knows it. She alone knows—She, the Great Force out of which this world emerges. The Primordial Force, the Supreme Mother, She brings down Her power for the good of the world. It is Her business to decide how and how long She will keep that power. For us there

is nothing else to do than to depend upon Her.'

Devotee: 'Sri Ramakrishna is our ideal. We are trying to shape our lives according to his teachings. We beg you to help us in this endeavour. Give us light. You are Thakur's intimate companion.'

Maharaj: 'My children, you are blessed in that you have made Sri Ramakrishna your ideal. He is the God of this age. Any one seeking shelter under him is bound to prosper. I bless whole-heartedly that you may gain strength; be blessed! May your human birth achieve its purpose! And as for light, my children, it will come from within. Try to go deep within yourselves. The more you go within, the more you will see light. Light is nowhere outside. It is within, it is within. Mother is shining as Light in every soul. In me, in you, in every one else. From Brahma right down to the tiniest insect or atom, animate or inanimate, everything is She. Pray to Her, the First Being. She holds the key. If She is pleased to unlock the door, the world of Light will be open unto you. She is the Light, the All-propelling Primordial Energy, the mind, the intellect, the ego, the Mistress of all, the Source of the whole universe. Out of Her have we come; into Her shall we merge. And that Primordial Energy, that Cosmic Force is beyond the pale of this mind, this intellect. Only a mind thoroughly purified knows Her. No amount of spiritual practices entitles a man to grasp Her or to find Her. She is self-illuminating. And with Her light the universe is enlightened. "There no sun shines, no moon, no star; no lightning is there; what to speak of fire? They all derive light from Her. Her light enlightens everything." Take shelter in that Mother. She is within you. She will open the way to Light.'

Devotee: 'Please tell us something about what you have realized by your lifelong pursuit of God. And also bless us so that that way to Light may be open to us.'

Maharaj: As I have just said, my

children (*very tenderly*), that Light is within you, too. Dive deep within yourselves. Then only will you get that Light.

"Dive deep, deeper, and still deeper into the ocean of form, my mind.

Search the lower depths, the very bottom; then only will you get the jewel of love."

The longer I live, the stronger this conviction is growing. There is no other way. Everything is within. That is why Thakur used to sing,

"Keep to yourself, mind; don't go elsewhere.

You'll get all you desire, only search within.

The jewel of jewels, the philosophers' stone can give you all you want.

How many precious stones lie strewn at the door-step of the indwelling God."

That is why I say, children, you must look within. This is the best advice I can give. Surrender to Mother. Pray earnestly, weeping like children. Then only will you be able to see the Light. Whenever we asked Thakur, he would say, "O my boys, pray to Mother earnestly. She will clear the way." Again and again he told us this. I, too, say the same. Pray and weep. Weep saying, "Mother, do let us have your vision, your vision." The Blissful Mother will grant you joy and peace. She will surely grant you these.'

Devotee: 'It is true. Light must come from within. But to bring it out some outside help is necessary, is it not? At any rate, is not the help of a teacher necessary? We beg of you that help.'

Maharaj: 'I give you my heartful blessings. May you attain peace! I have told you what to do about attaining the abode of peace. But you yourselves must do all that is to be done. From outside you get only suggestions; the rest you must do yourselves. The teacher's help is such a suggestion. But the more you proceed towards Him, the clearer the path will appear to be.'

## RELIGION AND SUFFERING

BY THE EDITOR

### I

The question of suffering, deserved or undeserved, has always evoked a passionate and vehement outburst of impatient protests from men since time immemorial. In a cosmos, in a world controlled by a just and merciful Creator, why such undeserved and pointless suffering? Nay, why should there be suffering and sorrow at all? Many religions say that in heaven all is happiness. But why should an omnipotent God then create this earth for human beings with its petty joys and sorrows, its interminable sufferings alternating with tantalizing moments of pleasure?

Not finding a satisfactory answer to such questions, the Charvakas in ancient India, and materialists in modern days, have denied altogether the existence of any God whatsoever as conceived by pious saints and philosophers. Even a Job begins to doubt the existence of God, and even if He did exist it becomes at times difficult to believe that He is just or merciful. It is said that during a period of great economic distress in the family, Swami Vivekananda was praying to God for help; but his mother, who overheard him, told him in a bitter mood to keep quiet, as, for all their prayers, they had not been able to keep the wolf from the door. It was said of the Pandavas that in spite of being the foremost warriors of their time and having Sri Krishna, the Lord himself, as their friend, there was no end to the sufferings they had to undergo. The Pandavas had to bear not only the sorrows of exile, but the even more galling and insufferable experience of seeing Draupadi indecently assaulted in public before their very eyes, and they were unable to do anything! Buddha, unable to bear the misery that he saw all around him, gave up a kingdom to become a mendicant. After untold sufferings he is said to have attained peace, but at what a price! Rama had not only to give up his kingdom, but had to bear the sorrow of the death of his heart-broken father, had to endure the unutterable pain of seeing his

wife carried away by Ravana; and even when he recovered her, it was only to banish her into an undeserved, yet unavoidable, exile into the forest, that he might be an exemplar to his people! And poor Sita! It is doubtful if any embodied soul ever suffered more than she did.

As Buddha taught, all is suffering in the world to a discerning and sensitive soul, he said :

This, O monks, is the sacred truth of suffering. Birth is suffering, old age is suffering, death is suffering, to be united with the unloved or unloving is suffering, to be separated from the loved one is suffering, not to obtain what one desires is suffering; in short the fivefold clinging to the earthly is suffering.

On the national scale, the story of suffering is even more terrifying. Famines, pestilence, floods, earthquakes, cyclones, and other natural calamities take away untold lives, leave millions on the level of a living death, especially in India and China. These, however, pale into insignificance before the pre-meditated cruelty that war, especially modern war, is. The pointless devastation of fair fields and cities, the murder or maiming of thousands of innocent men, women and children, whose only fault is that they are often dragooned into an unworthy war by the powerful military cliques that rule the roost in every state. Could anybody ever find a sensible reason for the miseries and sufferings of the Netherlanders or the Finns, the Ethiopians or the Red Indians, or the Jews and similar down-trodden peoples in the world? Neither Christianity nor Buddhism nor any other 'ism' has been able to stem the torrent of suffering that has deluged and is deluging poor human souls, struggling to live out their lives in a world into which they seem to have been thrust willy-nilly. No wonder that millions in modern times are losing faith in God or any Supreme Being ruling the world. If God cannot allow us to live a happy life here, what guarantee is there that in heaven life is going to be happier? Perhaps things might be worse, for we are told Satan

rebelled against God, and so had to be sent to hell!

## II

Scientists say that whenever a theory or hypothesis does not fit facts, as they see them, they conclude that the theory or hypothesis is wrong and has to be given up or altered. The same is true of any other field. While it is true that to all seeming the world seems a chaos, a bitter place where even happiness is unsatisfying because it is so transitory, it cannot be gainsaid that, probing into the secrets of nature and man, we find a plan and a purpose; order where we could only previously perceive chaos; not only justice but also mercy where we had supposed it was all 'nature red in tooth and claw'. But as Jeans says :

Our scientific ancestors of half a century ago were wont to regard the universe as a fortuitous concourse of atoms which, created they knew not when or how, had fallen together and chanced to form the earth and the starry heavens. The wider knowledge of today shows that the main mass and the main energy of the universe do not exist in the form of atoms but of intangible radiation. We may say the universe is mainly a universe of radiation, combined in a far lesser degree with the atoms out of which radiation is continually being formed. Can we regard this new universe as a fortuitous concourse of atoms and radiation?

And Jeans concludes that the universe is a cosmos and is found to be increasingly so as our knowledge deepens and widens. Biologists are coming more and more to see purpose in evolution. In nature side by side with war and competition, we have to note the facts of co-operation within the group, of the noble feelings of friendship, love, and parental affection. Nor can we ignore the experience of many who have felt the existence of a guiding and helping Hand in answer to their sincere prayers. The spiritual experiences of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, and a host of lesser spiritual luminaries are there to bear testimony to the existence of God.

## III

There might be some other answer, therefore, to the why and wherefore of suffering in the universe of our experience. We cannot, in a fit of petulant anger and impatience, give up our moorings and like the Charvakas and materialists live a mere life of animal pleasures. Such a course will only increase the use of the naturally easy policy of 'each

man for himself and the devil take the hindmost'. It will be a deliberate adoption of an *asuric* policy like the Western nations in their exploitation of the rest of the world. It would be committing moral and spiritual suicide. Rather should we hold on more firmly to all that is good, noble, and elevating, to all that tends to lessen suffering in so far as it lies in our power.

But in this task of removing human misery and suffering we must take note of the solutions offered by the various saints and philosophers and scientists of past and present times.

The Hindus have divided the sources of suffering into three : *adhyatmic* or resulting from one's inner nature; *adhibhautic* or resulting from causes traceable to the outside and visible world; and *adhidarvic* or resulting from causes supramundane, that is, not accountable on the basis of our present knowledge, but which we may attribute to the operation of divine forces like gods or God. The *adhyatmic* suffering results from our identification of ourselves with our physical bodies and mental states, operations, or ideas, and as such it is at the root of the two kinds of suffering which affect us through their action on our bodies or minds.

All religions speak of the necessity of giving up attachment to things that do not pertain to God or that do not have eternal values. The Hindus say that suffering will cease only when we are aware of our real nature. The Vedantic section describes it as unity with Brahman. The dualists describe it as living in the proximity or presence of God in His heaven, call it *Vaikuntha* or *Kailasa*. The Buddhists picture it as the annihilation of all desire or absolute desirelessness or nirvana. 'Vanity of vanity, all is vanity, except to love God, and Him only truly to serve', says the Christian, St. Thomas a Kempis. The Mohammedans mean the same thing in their prayer that God is one, and He alone is the Great to whom all prayers should be addressed. The common feature of all these solutions is that unless we merge ourselves in the Infinite, by whatever name It may be called, there will be no safety, no security from suffering.

Swami Vivekananda says thus :

Is there no way, no hope? That we are all miserable, that this world is really a prison, that even our so-called trailing beauty is but a prison-house, and that even our intellects and minds are

a prison-house have been known for ages upon ages. There has not been a man, there has not been a human soul, who has not felt it some time or other, however he may talk. . . . We find that with all this, with this terrible fact before us, in the midst of all this sorrow and suffering, even in this world, where life and death are synonymous, even here there is a voice going through all ages, through all countries, and through every heart. 'This My *maya* is divine, made up of qualities, and very difficult to cross, yet those that come unto Me, I cause them to cross this river of life.' 'Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden and I will give you rest.' . . . this voice comes to men when everything seems to be lost, and hope is flying away, when man's dependence on his own strength has been crushed down, and when everything seems to melt away between his fingers, and life is a hopeless ruin.

The *upanishadic* seers said the same thing : 'The Knower of the Self crosses the ocean of sorrow'; 'Knowing the great, infinite, bodiless Being, existing within these perishable bodies, the wise and brave man goes beyond all suffering and sorrow'.

#### IV

But to those to whom the spiritual path leading to a knowledge of the Self or God is closed, and whose minds are tormented by doubts, moral and intellectual, we would say that they should keep an open mind, and try to seek the truth in all reverence, humility, and earnestness. Whether we describe suffering as part of the unalterable nature of things, or as a part of the *lila* of the Lord, or due to our past *karmas*, still the fact remains that we find it difficult to reconcile ourselves to its existence. To say that God is all-good, omniscient, omnipotent, and at the same time to condemn His handiwork as evil is to give away one's premises, or to draw a wrong conclusion. Either God is not what we picture Him to be or the evil that we see in the world is perhaps not really evil. In the latter case the question still remains, why should good come through evil or appear as evil. As Swami Vivekananda says, 'the question remains to be answered, and it cannot be answered; and philosophy in India was compelled to admit this'.

Sir James Jeans was asked by J. W. N. Sullivan, 'Do you think that the existence of suffering presents an obstacle to belief in a universal scheme?'

His answer was, 'No, I think it possible that suffering can be accounted for along the usual ethical lines. That is to say, evil may be necessary for the manifestation of greater

good, just as danger is necessary for the manifestation of courage.'

'But does not suffering, in many cases, seem to be entirely pointless—to lead to no good that we can see?'

'I agree that we cannot understand the scheme of life—if there is one. At present we understand hardly anything. I hold, very strongly, that our present knowledge, in comparison with what man's knowledge may become, is merely infantile. In fact, on all these questions my philosophy could be summarized by the unpopular phrase "Wait and see".'

We give below the views of Sri Ramakrishna on this point as recorded by Shivanath Sastri :

On one occasion I was present in his (Sri Ramakrishna's) room along with a few others, who during the saint's temporary absence from the room began to discuss the reasonableness or otherwise of certain Divine attributes. I was getting tired of the discussion when the saint returned. Whilst entering the room he had caught some words of that discussion and had observed the heated nature of it. He at once put a stop to the discussion by saying, 'Stop, stop, what is the good of discussing the reasonableness or otherwise of Divine attributes? These things are got by other ways, by prayerfully waiting and thinking. For instance, you say God is good; can you convince me of His goodness by reasoning? Take for instance that mournful incident, the encroachment of the sea on the land that lately took place at Dakhin Sabazpore, the great inundation during a storm. We hear that thousands of men, women and children were carried away and drowned by that flood. How can you prove to me that a good God, a beneficent Deity, ordered all that? You will perhaps answer by pointing out the attendant good that that flood did; how it carried away filth, and fertilized the soil, and so on. But my question is this, could not a good God do all that without carrying off hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women, and children?' At this point one of the audience interrupted him by saying, 'Are we then to believe that God was cruel?'

Ramakrishna : 'Thou fool, who tells you to do that? Join your hands in reverential humility and say, "O God, we are too weak and too incompetent to know Thy nature and

Thy doings. Do Thou enlighten our understanding.””

Then he illustrated the truth by the following parable :—

“Take the case of two men travelling by a certain road, who take temporary shelter in a mango grove. It is the season for mangoes. One of them sits with pencil and paper in hand and begins a calculation. He counts the number of mango trees in the garden, the number of branches in each tree, and the average number of mangoes in each branch. Then he tries to imagine how many cart-loads of mangoes that garden will supply, and then again taking each cart-load to be worth so many rupees when taken to market,

how much money that garden will fetch.

‘When one man is engaged in counting up the probable income from the garden, the other is engaged in plucking ripe mangoes and eating them. Which of them do you consider the wiser of the two?’

‘The second one is certainly the wiser’, said the visitor, ‘for it is certainly wiser to eat the fruits than counting up on paper the probable income from the garden’.

Then the saint smiled and remarked : ‘It is likewise wiser to pray to God and to cultivate communion with Him than to argue about the reasonableness or otherwise of His attributes. Pray and open your hearts to Him, and the light will come to you.’

## THE MESSAGE OF THE UPANISHADS

By SWAMI ATULANANDA

The Vedas are the sacred scriptures of the Hindus. They contain the highest Truth, revealed to certain *rishis* or sages, and they are regarded by the Hindus as the highest authority on all religious questions. On these Vedas is based the Vedanta philosophy, as the word ‘Vedanta’ implies. For, the word ‘Vedanta’ means the end of the Veda. We may take this in the sense that Vedanta is contained in the final portion of the Vedas, or that Vedanta is the final Truth taught in the Vedas. The word ‘Veda’ means wisdom. So Vedanta stands for the end, the acme, of all wisdom.

The Vedas consist of three portions : the *Samhitas*, or collection of metrical prayers and hymns of praise; the *Brahmanas*, or prose treatises on the sacrifices; and the *Aranyakas*, or books intended for those who had retired to the solitude of the forest in search of Truth. The most important part of these *Aranyakas* is formed by the *upanishads* which are philosophical treatises.

In ancient times, life in India, was divided into four stages. The first stage of life was that of discipline. This lasted from youth to the age of manhood. During this period the young man was sent away from his home to the house of a teacher or *guru*. It was the boy’s duty to obey his *guru* implicitly and to serve him in every way. In

return the *guru* had to give the boy religious and moral instruction. The boy was taught the Vedas and all that was necessary for life. The chief method was to draw the student’s mind away from worldly attractions and to direct it towards the soul. After this period, which lasted usually for twelve years, the young man returned to his home and the second stage of life began, viz. the stage of manhood. He was to marry and to rear a family, and to perform all the duties of a good householder. With the third period a new life opened. After a man had performed his duties as husband, father, and citizen, he was allowed to leave his home and his village, and retire into the forest with or without his wife. All his social obligations ceased, but he had to practise self-denial and penances. He was to meditate on the great problems of life and death, and for that purpose he was expected to study the *upanishads*. Hence the *upanishads* were often called the ‘forest books’. But in those days there were no books; so the teaching had to come from competent teachers who had committed these teachings to memory. The fourth or last stage was adopted by those who had mastered the teaching and who wanted to devote the rest of their lives to meditation on its inner meaning. These were the

sannyasins or wandering monks, who, in solitude, hoped to realize the highest Truth.

The *upanishads* explain the true relation between Brahman, the Supreme Being, and the soul of man. When we consider the meaning of the word '*upanishad*', we see what wonderful results were expected from the study of these ancient treatises. For the word has been explained to mean 'That by knowing which all misery flies away', i.e. that wisdom which destroys the seed of *samsara* or worldly bondage. And that seed or cause of bondage is called *avidya* or ignorance. '*Upanishad*', then, means that knowledge which destroys the bondage of ignorance and which brings freedom or liberation. He who realizes that wisdom is freed from the jaws of death.

Max Müller explains it in a different way, though essentially the meaning is not very different. He says the word means 'sitting near a person'. And then he goes on to explain this by saying, 'these *upanishads* represent to us the outcome of "sittings" or "gatherings" which took place under the shelter of mighty trees in the forest where old sages and their disciples met together and poured out what they had gathered during days and nights spent in quiet solitude and meditation'.

When we speak of forests, we must not, however, think of a wilderness. In India, the forest near the village is like a happy retreat, cool and silent, with flowers and birds, with bowers and huts. Living in these forests, with few cares and no worldly ambitions, what should those forest-dwellers think and talk about if not about the higher things which relate to God and the soul, of what man is and what he will be hereafter. And so in the *upanishads* we find dialogues and discussions of a large number of sages who are so terribly earnest in their search after Truth that in some cases they even offer their heads to their adversaries if the latter can prove them to be in the wrong.

In these ancient days only such persons were admitted to the study of the *upanishads* who had been properly trained in the school of life, who had developed a highly moral character by fulfilling the duties of early life both as students and householders, who had fulfilled their civic and religious duties. The passions had to be brought under control; the body had to be hardened against external

disturbances such as heat and cold, hunger and thirst. And the mind had to be trained so as to acquire the mental qualities of tranquillity, restraint, self-denial, collectedness, and faith. It is the quiet, controlled mind that can grasp the teachings of Vedanta. For the mind has to be trained to look within, for then alone shall we be able to realize that everything is stored up in man, that the grandest truths are already deposited in man's heart. All we have to do is to withdraw our senses from the external objects of desire, and discover that we are the possessors of the greatest treasure. For the knowledge of God is within us.

In studying the Vedas, we must remember that we are dealing with the oldest literature in the world. It is the voice that comes to us from remote ages, when conditions were entirely different from what they are today. The mode of life greatly influences our mode of thinking and our way of expressing thought. The mind acts differently under different conditions. And so it is often not easy for us today to follow the line of reasoning which was adopted thousands of years ago. The ancient *rishis* who, with their disciples, lived in rural districts, often in a forest, removed from the unrest and anxiety of city life, at a time when instruction was given orally only, in their attempt to put into words, thoughts and visions which came from spheres beyond the ordinary run of thought, used language and modes of expressions which, to us, often, have little or no meaning. And even the later commentators on Vedic thought often use arguments and throw up objections which, to us, appear unnecessary, and the strength of which goes beyond our comprehension. Their arguments seem often devoid of meaning, nay, even childish. When we take up an ancient scripture, be it the Vedas, or the Avesta of the Zoroastrians, the scriptures of the Buddhists, or the Koran, we expect to find books full of ancient wisdom, moral teachings, and outbursts of religious enthusiasm. And then we are apt to be greatly disappointed. For, just as in the Bible of the Christians, so also in the Vedas we meet with many a page which, in our opinion, might have just as well been omitted.

Max Müller, in his introduction to the *upanishads*, has tried to explain this fact.

The ancient sacred books, he says, have been handed down by oral tradition for many generations before they were consigned to writing. In an age when there was nothing corresponding to what we call literature, every saying, every proverb, every story, handed down from father to son, or from guru to disciple, received, very soon, a kind of hallowed character. They became sacred heirlooms, sacred because they came from an unknown source, from a distant age. It was received with reverence, it was never questioned or criticized.

Some of these ancient sayings were preserved because they were so true, so striking, that they could not be forgotten. They contained eternal truths, expressed for the first time in human language. But besides those utterances which had a vitality of their own, strong enough to defy the power of time, there were others which might have struck the minds of the listeners with great force under the peculiar circumstances that evolved them, but which, when these circumstances were forgotten, became trivial and almost unintelligible. So we find war songs, descriptions of ceremonial acts, and incantations which, cherished and valued at that time, today survive as relics of the past. Furthermore, words and sentences respected from age to age, may, in course of time, have been misunderstood, replaced by other words and even new expressions may have been added as explanations of the truths taught.

These considerations may help to explain how, mixed up with real treasures of thought, we meet with, in the sacred books, so much which never had any life or meaning at all, or if it had meaning at the time, has completely lost it, in the form in which it has come down to us. Besides we must make allowance for national culture, taste, and tradition.

In studying ancient scriptures we must further remember that translations, no matter how accurate, can never take the place of the originals. And where the originals require not only to be read, but to be studied, to be read again and again to gain understanding of what they intend to express, translations require to be studied with much greater care before we can hope to gain a real understanding of the intentions of their authors. It is much easier to mis-

understand a translation than the original. And one must be careful not to condemn, as devoid of meaning, a sentence or chapter which seems at first sight unintelligible in a translation.

We are greatly mistaken should we expect to get a clear understanding of ancient scriptures and their meaning by simply running through their pages. It is only by persistent effort that we can hope to get an insight into any scripture. It requires a sincere searching investigation with a concentrated mind.

Concentration of thought, *ekagrata* or one-pointedness, is very necessary in the study of ancient literature. Our mind is in constant motion. We are not able to direct it towards one object for any length of time. But in the Vedas we are told that in order to grasp a spiritual idea fully, we have to shut our mental eye to everything else, dwelling only on that one thought.

With the life we are leading now, a life of unrest, hurry, and competition, it has become almost impossible for us ever to arrive at that intensity of thought which the Hindu scriptures mean by *ekagrata* or one-pointedness, which they prescribed as an indispensable condition to the attainment of spiritual insight. And the science of yoga was developed in India through the pressing need to acquire this power, to draw the mind away from all disturbing impressions, and to fix it on one subject only. We must consider all these before we decide to reject any part of the Vedas. At the same time we need not trouble ourselves with those parts that convey no meaning to us. These may be set aside as of little importance to us. And there will be left more than enough that will prove to us of the greatest value.

A study of the Vedas should have, for its object, the enlightenment, in spiritual matters, of those who devote themselves to it. The Vedas have to be approached by us in this spirit only. If our study does not bring us spiritual insight, then it is in vain. Therefore one must take up this study with a heart open to Truth, with a sincere desire to realize the Truth. But in studying the scriptures, some of which are over three thousand years old, we must be prepared to meet with difficulties, and great patience is required. We may remember, in this connection, the beautiful simile, given by

Swami Vivekananda, of the oyster, which, opening its shell when the spring rain falls, comes to the surface of the ocean to catch a drop of the precious rain water, then returning to its bed transforms, slowly and patiently, this drop of water into a precious pearl. Similarly, as we go on studying the scriptures, we must try to take in one or two precious truths that appeal to us most and meditate upon them till they become part of us. Then only will they be most valuable in our spiritual progress and in the formation of our character. We have to gradually realize the truth of these thoughts of the ancient *rishis*, many of which may appear strange to us at first. But as we hear them again and again, and meditate upon them, they will reveal their meaning to us. It is then that we will be able to appreciate them and reap their benefit.

Every religion, every philosophy requires an attentive and devoted study. 'These teachings must first be heard, then thought about, and then meditated upon.' Then the inner meaning, the spirit of the scriptures will become clear to us. It is no useless study, for, in the Gita we read that a little understanding even brings great benefit. How much more, then, will we be helped by a close study and practical application of what we have understood. For the Vedas reveal to man the eternal truth that man is immortal, is one with the great eternal spirit from which the universe has evolved, in which it exists, and into which it will resolve in the end. To realize that we are all parts of the one divine Spirit is the end and aim of existence. It is the one lesson that every individual has to learn and to realize for himself.

To understand the teachings of the ancient sages and founders of great religions we must become like them. What they have seen, heard, and experienced, we also shall have to hear, see, and experience. Then alone shall we learn the spirit of their teachings. First we must listen to the Truth, then we must ponder over it, then meditate deeply. And then, in time, we will fully understand the Truth. We will then become an embodiment of Truth. Religion is, as Swami Vivekananda has said, a being and becoming. 'And ye shall know the Truth,' said Jesus, 'and Truth will make you free'. Knowing the Truth means becoming the Truth, i.e. we will realize

that we are Spirit, beyond birth and death, without beginning, without end, one with the only Existence which is God. Then we become free.

The Vedas can never be fully understood by mere perusal. The Truth must be felt, must be met with face to face. Then only can we understand it. 'O Thou, Self-revealing One, reveal Thyself to us', is part of a Vedic prayer. From darkness we must enter into Light, from death into Immortality, from the unreal into the Real, and the Vedas show us the way to do that. We may have to wade through much which seems superfluous to us, but every now and then we will come upon grains of Truth, which will lift us beyond this universe, which will make us realize the Spirit within, which will sustain us in our life journey, and which will keep us from sin and evil, making us strong and holy. When we understand the spirit of the Vedas, we will then know it for certain that we are essentially divine, the children of the One God.

The difficulty in our modern times is that we are always in such a terrible hurry. Even God we want to realize in a hurry. If we do not realize the Truth in a few years, we are disappointed and we become discouraged. That is not as it should be. It was very different with the spiritual aspirants in ancient times. Sometimes a student asks a question of his guru, and the teacher, in reply, gives only a hint. And then the disciple is told to serve his teacher for twelve years or so, before he can ask another question. One teacher, after giving his disciple some instructions, asks him to take some cows to the forest and not to return till the herd is increased to one hundred cows. But these young students were not discouraged. They went and did as they were told. And we read how, through sincerity, light came to them. They were in no hurry to get their brain filled with a lot of information which they could not digest. They were ready to serve their teachers for years even for a little instruction. They thought over what they were taught, day and night, year after year, and thus even a little instruction became very fruitful. The students of the ancient times learnt that by patient and deep thought all questions are answered from within.

Coming to the teachings of the *upanishads*, we may start with a story from the *Chhandogya Upanishad*. Indra, the god of the

Devas, heard that a great *rishi*, Prajapati by name, had knowledge of the Self. He thought, 'Let me go and serve Prajapati, and let me ask him about the Self.' So he approached Prajapati, fuel in hand, as was the custom for pupils approaching their teachers, as a token that they wished to serve him. Then he dwelt with Prajapati for thirty-two years. At last Prajapati asked Indra, 'For what purpose have you dwelt here?' Indra replied: 'A saying of yours is being repeated, viz. the Self, which is free from sin, free from old age, from death and grief, from hunger and thirst is what we must search out, that it is what we must try to understand. Now I have dwelt here because I wish to know that Self.' Then Prajapati told him to look into a basin of water, and asked him, 'What do you see?' Indra replied, 'I see a picture of myself, even to the very hairs and nails.' Prajapati said, 'Clean yourself and put on your best clothes and look again. What do you see?' Indra said, 'I see myself clean with my best clothes on.' Prajapati said, 'What you see that is the Self, that is immortal, the fearless; that is Brahman.' Then Indra went away. That is all the instruction Indra gets after serving his guru for thirty-two years. Indra thought over the answer and he was not satisfied. He thought how this changeable body could be the immortal Self. The teacher could not surely have meant it. So he returned to Prajapati, and asked for further instruction. Prajapati was very glad to see his earnestness and told him, 'Live with me another thirty-two years, and I shall instruct you again.' So after thirty-two years Prajapati told Indra, 'He who moves about happy in dreams, he is the Self, he is the immortal, the fearless; this is Brahman.' Then Indra went away. But again doubt arose in his mind and he returned to Prajapati, and served him again for another thirty-two years before he got more instruction. And so, the *upanishadic* story shows that Indra served Prajapati for 101 years before he received his final instruction. Prajapati told him that the body was indeed mortal, but that it was the abode of that which is immortal, and which is not dependent on the body. At last Indra understood and realized his own divinity.

One has only to admire such patience, perseverance, and willingness to serve, and compare these with the modern attitude in regard to the acquirement of knowledge. If we do

not get a ready answer we are disgusted. We are not prepared to think for ourselves. Therefore we get no results. If we search in the right spirit and with patience, light will come sooner or later.

In the vast mass of Vedic literature, the sublimest system of thought is the Vedanta philosophy as we find it expounded in the *Vedanta Sutras*, the *upanishads*, and the *Bhagavad Gita*. There are many other works on the Vedanta, but the scriptures mentioned above are the oldest. These are standard works which most of the sannyasins in India study, with commentaries. They are called *prasthanas*, meaning books that contain the knowledge which leads us away from the world and ignorance. The central truth around which the entire system of Vedantic thought has been woven, is, in the words of Shankaracharya, 'Brahman is real, the world is false; man's soul is Brahman and nothing else.' And he adds: 'There is nothing worth gaining, there is nothing worth enjoying, there is nothing worth knowing, but Brahman alone; for he who knows Brahman is Brahman.' This, in short, is the fundamental Truth taught in the Vedas. God alone is real. He is eternal, unchanging, the Rock of Ages. The world is fleeting, but man's soul is God, and nought else. It is a bold statement, but the sages knew it to be true, and taught it fearlessly. They themselves had risen beyond death. They knew eternal life because they had entered into it. They spoke with authority and experience. They knew that the only thing worth striving for, the only thing worth gaining, the only thing worth knowing is Brahman. For, 'What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' said Jesus.

To know God truly is to become God. Once we know Him in all His fullness, we can never lose Him again. We are of His own spirit; He is our life; His existence is our existence. That is what the Vedas teach us: *tat-tvam-asī* or 'Thou art That'. The God we are searching for in books, in temples, in forest retreats, in images—that God resides in the heart of all beings. Sri Krishna says in the *Gita*: 'I am the Self, existent in the heart of all beings; I am the beginning, the middle, and also the end of all beings.' Our gross body may turn into dust, our subtle body may dissolve into the finer elements, but our soul, the real Self, is indestructible, for it is one with God. We

are all part of Him. This one Truth we find expounded, again and again, in Vedantic scriptures. The knowledge of Self is the one quest. In the *upanishads*, the question asked by students mostly is, 'What is that one Truth, knowing which, everything else is grasped?' All other knowledge is of little importance compared with this one fundamental Truth.

This fact is nicely illustrated in the *Chhandogya Upanishad*. Shvetaketu was the son of rishi Aruni. To him his father said : 'Shvetaketu, go to school, for there is none belonging to our race who has not studied the Vedas. For it is not sufficient, my boy, to be a brahmin by birth alone. He only can be called a true brahmin, who has mastered the Vedas.' Having begun his apprenticeship under a wise guru, when he was 12 years of age, Shvetaketu returned to his father when he was 24, having then studied all the principal Vedas. The young man considered himself well read, and he was very proud of his learning. His father, noticing the change in his son, was sorry. For, what does knowledge amount to if our character is not thereby improved, and if we have not gained spiritual knowledge as well? So, one day, the father called Shvetaketu and said to him : 'My son, as you are so conceited and you consider yourself so learned, let me see what you really know. Have you ever asked your teacher for that instruction by which we perceive that which the senses cannot perceive? Have you learned about that which reaches beyond the mind and intellect?' Shvetaketu did not understand what his father meant. So he asked, 'What is that instruction, sir?' And then the father begins to teach him about the *atman*, the One Self, the soul of man. 'You see, my son, if you know what clay is, then you know the true nature of all things made of clay. For, things made of clay are nothing but clay to which has been given name and form. And so it is with ornaments made of gold. If you know what gold is, then you know the true nature of all golden ornaments. These are only gold to which name and form have been given. Name and form are what make the difference in objects.' And so Aruni goes on to explain to Shvetaketu, in different ways, how by knowing the original substance everything made of that substance is also known. By removing the name and form of all things made of that substance we again

have the original substance. And then, at last, he comes to the highest Truth, viz. that, if we know Brahman, then we know the true nature of everything of every being. For the whole universe is only Brahman on which we have superimposed name and form. Brahman, seen through name and form, appears as the universe. Man is that same Brahman. The body is only name and form. That will disappear in time. But the formless, the nameless man will persist through all eternity, for he is one with God, one with Brahman, the divine omnipresent spirit.

As the pot, when destroyed, turns back into clay, as the bracelet in the melting pot becomes gold, so man, when purified by the fire of wisdom, goes back to his source, Brahman, the One Existence. He who realizes this enjoys eternal freedom. And even in this life, man can realize that Truth. That is the teaching of the *upanishads*. It is illustrated in various ways; it is told in stories, it is discussed at the courts of kings, it is told by the *rishis* in the forest; everywhere we find this one question discussed. It is also taught in the *Bhagavad Gita*, and it is put forth in almost every *upanishad*.

What is life, what is this universe, what is man, what is God? These are the questions which have arisen in the human mind in all ages. And these questions find their answer in the *Vedas*. In the *Katha Upanishad*, Nachiketa asks the same questions of Death. And Death, after trying his sincerity in many ways, at last consents to instruct the boy. He tells him that God, the Spirit, is 'smaller than the small, greater than the great, hidden in the heart of every creature'. 'The wise man who knows the Self as bodiless within the bodies, as unchanging among all changing things, as great and omnipresent, he never grieves.' Only the *rishis*, by their subtle and sharp intellect, can know that Self. But every one of us can become a *rishi*. By controlling mind and speech, by always concentrating the mind on God, we also can become *rishis*. 'Arise, awake,' says Death to Nachiketa, 'your question has been answered; now realize it.' 'The sharp edge of a razor is difficult to pass over. Even so it is with the path that leads to realization of the *atman*, the Divine Self.' But there is no cause for despair, for 'he who has perceived that which is without sound, without touch, without form, without decay

or smell, eternal and unchangeable, he is freed from the jaws of death'.

Shvetaketu, we read again, could not understand how God can be omnipresent and still we do not perceive His presence. So his father tries to make it clear to him through examples. The ancient *rishis* were very practical in their method of teaching. They used a sort of kindergarten system. The father tells Shvetaketu to bring a seed of a particular tree. When it is brought, he asks him to break it in two. 'What do you see inside?' 'Nothing, sir', replied the boy. Then the father said, 'My child, that subtle essence which you cannot see in the seed, from that a large tree will grow up. So also from the subtle Spirit which one cannot see the whole universe comes into being.' Shvetaketu thought over the question. But still he could not understand the point clearly. So he asked his father to give him another example. 'Very well,' said the father, 'bring me a glass of water. Now put a lump of salt in the water and come to me again in the morning.' This done, the boy came the next morning. 'My son,' said the father, 'give me the lump of salt you put in the water yesterday.' 'It is melted, sir.' 'Then taste the water from the top, from the middle, and from the bottom. How does it taste?' 'It tastes salty, sir, all

the way through.' Then the father explains how, even as the salt is in the water though we do not see it, even so the Supreme, though invisible, dwells in us. He who has realized this Truth, for him there is no more sorrow, no more pain. He who grasps the teachings of the Vedas is beyond all *maya*, all delusion. He sees the One, he realizes the One, he lives and moves and has his being in the One-Eternal Being which is Brahman.

We must all try to realize the Truth taught in the *upanishads*. When Shvetaketu brought the lump of salt, he could see and touch it. But when the salt was dissolved in the water, he had to use another sense, the sense of taste, to discover it. So also one can perceive the Spirit in the body by means only other than the means employed to perceive matter. Matter can be perceived through the five senses. But to perceive the spirit another sense has to be opened up. That sense is called *yoga-drishhti*, the sense of spiritual intuition. In every one that sense is present, but only few have developed it. With others it lies dormant. That spiritual sense is opened up through the process of meditation. When it is once opened, one can know the spirit, and understand the deeper meaning of the Vedas. All knowledge is within us, and meditation opens up the avenues of that knowledge.

## DEATH'S DOOR

BY P. SAMA RAO

Death's door is ajar. . . .  
 Selves pent up long  
 In reeking flesh and bone,  
 Like arcs of light  
 Multi-coloured,  
 Dart heavenward  
 To that sweet land  
 Of eternal Love,  
 Their Solace and Home.

Or, like the petals  
 Of life's full-blown rose  
 Their ardour done,  
 Shrivel up and fall  
 One by one,  
 Into the chalice of Time  
 Beyond memory's ken. . . .

## THE LEGACIES OF VIVEKANANDA

BY PROF. BENOY KUMAR SARKAR

### *Vivekananda as a World Power*

In September 1893, Vivekananda addressed the Parliament of Religions at Chicago. There he came into contact with representatives of the entire Western world as well as of Asia. In that atmosphere of some five thousand intellectuals comprising businessmen, engineers, psychologists, anthropologists, literary men, philosophers, and heads of religious associations, he was recognized as a creative force by the international standard. Both Europeans and Americans encountered in him a great power and could realize that, out in Asia somewhere on the banks of the Ganges, a spirit was born that was destined to conquer the world. Vivekananda became a world-conqueror--a *digvijayi*, a person in whose thoughts and activities were found some of the most creative tendencies of the age. His was the message of an affirmative faith. He was found to be another Nietzsche or another Carlyle for the remaking of inter-human relations. It was the philosophy of an 'everlasting yea' that he contributed to the thought of the times.

The world felt that India was capable of producing persons with whose contributions it was possible for men and women in every part of the world to co-operate in an effective manner. The legacies of Vivekananda are immense and those legacies are being enjoyed today both by East and West. Mankind in the two hemispheres has been functioning as the combined legatee of Vivekanandism. It has been possible since then for the most diverse races of mankind to work together on the same platform on terms of equality as well as of mutual self-respect. Previously Asians used to be treated by Eur-Americans as mere pupils and, of course, as slaves. For the first time Europeans and Americans felt convinced that the days of their cultural and spiritual overlordship were getting to be over. Vivekananda is the first Indian of modern times to compel the Western races to admit Asians to the status of equality with themselves.

### *The Asian Monroe Doctrine*

In Vivekananda's American activities as well as later movements in India and abroad mankind found the beginnings of a new order in inter-racial relations. The submerged and suppressed races of Asia were, by the energetic creativities of Vivekananda, elevated to the dignity of peers>equals and colleagues of the militarily dominant and politically domineering races of Europe and America. The whites, equipped as they were with their slogan of the 'whiteman's burden' were beginning to feel that their chauvinism and albinocracy were soon to become things of the past. Anti-albinocratic enthusiasm as well as achievements became the order of the day in India as well as in the rest of Asia. Indians as well as other Asians were inspired into the thought and feeling that they were to enjoy the same human dignity and social prestige in International Congresses of Arts, Letters, Sciences, Philosophies, Politics, and what not as the representatives of the white races. The distinctions, differences, disparities, and divergences between the East and the West were subverted; and in the melting pot was coming into shape the soul-enfranchising doctrine of Asia's equality and identity with Eur-America.

This is the Monroe Doctrine from Asia's standpoint. In Vivekananda's life-work we have to see registered the establishment of this spiritual dogma. He succeeded in transforming the pattern of inter-human relations obtaining between East and West and ushering into being the new organization of spiritual forces which enabled the West to know the limitations of its ambitions vis-a-vis the East. It was Vivekananda whose activities and propagandas of all sorts, in India and foreign countries, succeeded in spiritualizing India with what may be called the 'Asia for Asians' slogan in the cultural sphere. No legacy of Vivekananda is more substantial and epoch-making than this cult.

### *The Ramakrishna Empire*

Vivekanandism was an amalgam of moral forces in which the soul force of the *upani-shads* and the Gita got multiplied by the idealism of Fichte and the positivism of Comte. The Young India that came into being under the inspiration of Vivekananda's world-conquest has been a growing concern. It has been moving from achievement to achievement and from country to country. Today the ideas and idealism of Vivekananda are embodied in thousands of Indians, both Hindus and Mussalmans. Every Hindu who is co-operating with Eur-Americans as a scientific investigator, labour leader, or social worker, in Asia or elsewhere, is a representative of Vivekanandism as a living reality. Every Mussalman in whose philosophical researches or industrial achievements Eur-America can detect influences of world-wide importance is Vivekanandist in spirit. All such Indians, irrespective of their formal faiths, Hindu or Muslim, are helping forward the establishment of the 'Asian Monroe Doctrine' on a secure and sound basis. Add to this the activities of some five hundred missionaries of the Ramakrishna Order, created by Vivekananda, and we shall get an idea of the numerous centres of action and thought in which Vivekanandism has been finding expression in diverse personalities, institutions and movements.

It is indeed possible to say that the system of thoughts and actions for which Vivekananda lived and died is world-wide in dimensions and embraces the two hemispheres. We have today an empire of Indian influences in East and West, and this empire is aptly to be described as the Indian Empire of the 20th century. I have often described it as the Ramakrishna Empire, because Vivekananda used to associate each one of his activities with the name of his mighty guru—Ramakrishna. This creation of Vivekananda—the Ramakrishna Empire--can be historically appraised as the successor and

continuator of the Buddhist world-empire of ancient and mediæval times.

The 'Greater India' of today,—this Indian Empire of the twentieth century,—is in intimate liaison with the creative forces in the most diverse nooks and corners of the globe. It is already recognized as a power, —although small but growing power,—among the powers of the world. Mankind in East and West is consciously and deliberately co-operating with the Ramakrishna Empire in order to re-create the world-economy, world-polities, and world-culture. In this situation is to be envisaged one of the most tremendous legacies of Vivekananda.

### *The Vivekanandas of Today and Tomorrow*

Vivekananda died in 1902. But he lives still. Today at the end of over half a century since the Chicago event of 1893, the name of Vivekanandas in India is legion. Creative men and women of India are self-conscious enough like Vivekananda of fifty years ago in their aspirations, demands, and creativities. They are filled with the spirit of utilizing the *vishva-shakti* (world forces) in the interest of India's self-assertion. Difficulties and hindrances of all sorts they know how to annihilate. Their spirit is the spirit 'of conquering and to conquer'. For the last fifty years they have been subverting obstacles after obstacles. At every step they have known how to overpower the dangers that be. Each one of the self-conscious men and women among Indian publicists, scholars, missionaries, labour leaders, and others, active in diverse fields both at home and abroad, is looking forward to fresh conquests- after new encounters with novel dangers. Dare-devil enthusiasm for the establishment of India's permanent and solid addresses in the world of moral, economic, and political values constitutes the dominant urges of the Indian Vivekanandas of today and tomorrow.

## MONOTHEISM AND POLYTHEISM\*

BY PROF. ABINASH CHANDRA BOSE, M.A., PH.D.

### II. POLYTHEISM

#### *Primitive Polytheism or Animism*

The beginnings of polytheism are in animism to which some of the important traits of monotheism also may be traced.

First, animism believes that material objects are animated by the spirit of a god or a goddess. Hence its deities have limited spheres of activity. Fetishes and idols of primitive religion are believed to be divinely animated objects and they are reported to be performing miracles. The old arguments against idolatry—'Your idol cannot speak,' 'Your idol cannot defend itself against a robber' etc.,—are based on the animistic conception of religion—that objects of worship, being divinely animated, possess supernatural powers.

Animism is attached not to objects only, but to places also. In primitive religion there are local deities operating in particular places. The original literal conception of monotheism has a common point with animism that God is a local spirit—an invisible Person with a habitat. Only, instead of a spot on the earth, monotheism believes that a far-away place, called heaven, is the habitat of the Divinity.

Again, miracles have formed a chief basis of monotheisms also; a very important miracle being God's dictation of the scripture to the prophet, and a greater still, God's literal fatherhood.

Secondly, primitive religion believes that God desires food like earthly creatures. And, whether because the primitive food of man was chiefly animals, therefore, animal sacrifice to God was common; or it was some sacred animal (totem) that was originally sacrificed on ceremonial occasions; or it was believed that God, being a vindictive being, needed compensation for the sins of men through sacrifice of lives; or being a cruel being, as primitive rulers were, received sadistic satisfaction from cruelty: whatever the reason, the propitiation of God by animal sacrifice became a common ritual. But it is strange to note that monotheism which repu-

diated fetishism and idolatry did not repudiate the ritual of animal sacrifice. The most typical of monotheistic creeds—Islam—is uncompromisingly severe on idol-worship and on the belief in multiple gods—has practised animal sacrifice on a large scale. Christianity, that, unlike Jainism and Buddhism, believes that animals have no souls to save, has, however, eschewed animal sacrifice, but on the basis of a doctrine which theoretically implies human sacrifice, or in a more specific form, the sacrifice of the sacred animal (totem), or of the holy man: features that characterized very crude and violent forms of primitive religion. Thus in one important respect monotheism has made no progress in relation to primitive polytheism.

In certain Indian religious sects attempts have been made to counteract not only the practice but the very ideology of animal sacrifice in religion, though there are other sects which practise animal sacrifice on a wide scale.

Thirdly, primitive religion guided the social attitude of men on the basis of tribal feeling. The following description of the mentality of the primitive tribe may be read with interest in this connection:

"The attitude of an uncultured human being towards any individual who is not a member of their restricted social group is one of profound distrust and generally active hostility. "In primitive culture," observed Dr. Brinton, "there is a dual system of morals; the one of kindness, love, help, and peace, applicable to the members of our own clan, tribe, or community; the other of robbery, hatred, enmity, and murder, to be practised against all the rest of the world, and the latter is regarded as much a . . . sacred duty as the former".' (Robert Briffault, *The Mothers*, New York; also reproduced in *The Making of Man*, N. Y.).

With the progress of civilization, the tribal patriotism and tribal hatred were greatly over-

\* Concluded from the May number.

come by breaking up tribal barriers and grouping men into large societies, and developing the ideal of common fellowship, culminating in that of the fraternity of all members of the human race. But monotheistic creeds with their well-defined doctrine of the infidel, the heathen, and the heretic, went back to the primitive tribal feeling, only in a more extensive and aggravated way, because what was the attitude of a comparatively small group of people forming a tribe became now the feeling of millions following a religion.

In India the racial-economic grouping known as the caste has replaced this tribal spirit. But, socially, caste continues the tribal exclusiveness to a great extent, though the hatred of the infidel is absent here.

#### *Cultural Polytheism*

In the animistic stage polytheism is attached to certain crude instincts like the hankering for miracles, delight in killing and hatred of the man outside the class or tribe. In cultural polytheism new traits are developed which make it a strong ally of human civilization. We shall consider here some of its essential features.

(a) *Creativeness of Polytheism.* Primitive polytheism is to cultural polytheism what, for example, folk poetry is to art poetry. Polytheism in its cultural form is creative. Being a creation of the mind of man, it is, like all art, an expression of imagination. It does not deal with facts, it deals with visions which, in the hands of a genius, embody themselves in concrete forms either in language or in terms of some other art.

While monotheism believes in one God in heaven, polytheism peoples the land and air and water with an inexhaustible variety of gods and goddesses. And with polytheism, worship consists in picturesque ritual beautified by poetry and art—by music, by dancing, acting, sculpture, and painting. To these are sometimes added the poetry of things—of flames, lamps, incense, flowers, fruits, leaves and grass-blades, and of the beauty spots of the land. The polytheistic worshipper, except for the survivals of primitive customs like animal sacrifice, creates an atmosphere of beauty about him in offering worship to his God. As a result, even where there is no religion as such, there is much in polytheism that men will value as poetry and

art and wish to preserve from a cultural point of view.

The imaginative nature of polytheism makes it essentially different from monotheism. The former works on poetic *visions*, the latter on *facts*—which are accepted through faith. So *Polytheism* is *poetical*, *monotheism* *historical*. And, as Aristotle said the poetical truth is universal, while the historical is particular. Hence Greek polytheism has inspired people living in different ages and professing different religions, while, on the other hand, monotheism is found to move only those who have placed their faith in what are claimed by it as facts.

Matthew Arnold said about Hellenism and Hebraism, that the former is guided by 'spontaneity of consciousness', which leads to poetic creation, and the latter by 'strictness of conscience', producing dogmatism in respect of the historical as well as the moral belief. These descriptions would also apply, respectively, to polytheism and monotheism.

It will be found that polytheism flourishes as long as it is creative, and monotheism as long as it remains dogmatic. When polytheism comes to rest upon dogma, all its spontaneity and imaginative appeal fail, and mere dead hollow forms remain. That is how Egyptian and Babylonian polytheism disappeared. Without creative energy and imaginative vision, polytheism quickly descends into simple fetishism. In the religious life of the Indian masses, the claims of the creative imagination of cultural polytheism and of primitive fetishism are found to be always in conflict. On the one side, there is the poetic and philosophical school interpreting the images in temples figuratively and symbolically and leading religion to the planes of art and metaphysics; on the other hand there is the dogmatic school taking the image as a divinely animated object and associating it with magic and miracle.

Thus we find that polytheism lives by creativeness and thought, while monotheism lives by dogma and belief. Take, for example, the attitude of the creeds towards statements made in the sacred books. A monotheist finds it written in his scripture that God created the earth as the centre of the universe, and on the earth He created paradise and in paradise He put Adam, the first man, and out of his rib He created the first woman, Eve. Now he finds that if he

is to be a true follower he must believe in each one of these statements; that if he does not, he is a heretic. We do not know of any monotheistic theologian who has taken these statements in a figurative way.

Take, on the other hand, a story of creation from polytheism. One of the Hindu *puranas* says that in the beginning there was a big *lingam*, a stone pillar, and that two gods, one Brahma and the other Vishnu, tried to find the two ends of it. The one flew up as a swan and the other crawled down as a tortoise at the speed of the mind, and each went on for a thousand years; but both returned disappointed, without being able to find the extreme end of the pillar. Vishnu confessed the fact and was declared by a voice to be the true god; Brahma, however, falsely claimed to have found the origin and was discredited.

Now the religion of which the *purana* forms a scripture does not require of the follower a literal belief in the story given above. What it requires is an imaginative understanding of the story. Hence the issue here is not whether Brahma became a swan and Vishnu a tortoise or whether it is possible to travel at the speed of the mind and for a thousand years; the question is, what is the underlying meaning of the legend? That meaning is clear enough to the man possessing imagination and thinking power. It is that the ultimate beginnings of things are mysterious, that it is not possible to know them really and that one who claims to do so is a false god or prophet. The Indian *jnani*, the wise man, while reading the story, will remind himself of what the *Veda* has said about the first origins :

Who verily knows and who can here  
declare it—  
Whence was it born and wherefrom came  
this creation?

(Rig., x. 120. 6);

and he will say with Socrates that he is wiser than others because he knows that he knows nothing in respect of ultimate things.

(b) *Paganism*. Another characteristic which distinguishes polytheism from monotheism, is the attachment of the former to the earth—what is known as paganism. The monotheist is at peace with himself and his surroundings when he finds, through a strong faith, that God is in His heaven and all is

right with the world. The holy man of monotheism rejects the earth and its seduction and lives for a world to come. Paganism may believe in the existence of a world after death, but it gives its heart away to the earth and is attached to all its good things. It hardly makes a difference between body and soul, matter and spirit. It will strive after spirituality through rich sense perceptions. In the dust of the earth it will discover the divine light.

(c) *Naturalism*. The primitive ideas of fetishism are transformed in cultural polytheism into poetry and spirituality. Just as, instead of a well or a spring, a whole river, in its course of hundreds of miles, becomes sacred in polytheism, similarly a whole township or a whole mountain may become sacred. And why not the whole earth? The polytheist delights in the earth—its beauty and wonder, its sweetness and all the comfort and joy that it offers. He tries to build a heaven on the earth itself. The hymn to the Earth in *Atharva Veda* is a grand paean of naturalism.

(d) *Mythology*. This attachment to the glory of the earth has found most prolific expression in poetry and the arts through the creative imagination of polytheism. Every aspect of nature is deified. Greek as well as Indian mythology is rich in this imaginative creation.

In a typical polytheistic creed, every god or goddess is modelled on human beings. Each has his points of strength as well as weakness. None is altogether perfect. The activities of one may be counteracted by those of another. Thus, except for their supernatural powers including that of working miracles, they have the same character interest as men. These ancient legends, therefore, are the first fictional literature of the world. They range from the sublime to the ridiculous, from the refined to the coarse. Another interesting point about them is the variety of material included in them. While at their finest they consist of allegory and symbolism and suggest deep philosophical thought, at their crudest they touch fetishism, totemism, and similar other features of primitive religion. A polytheistic pantheon is a museum of human civilization. Sometimes the same deity or the ritual is found to represent different strata of human

culture, of which one may be divided from the other by ages.'

(e) *Anthropolatry*. Anthropolatry—the worship of a human individual or human individuals—was made popular in India by Buddhism and Jainism. The theory of 'avatar', in the typical form of which the divinity was believed to have 'descended' into a human being, formed the brahminical counterpart to this view. A similar idea occurs in Christianity also, but there the typical features of monotheism are maintained. For example, the avatar when he is a human being is, according to the Hindu conception, born a man with human parents; but monotheism with its factual outlook considers the divine parenthood as literally true. Another difference is interesting. The Hindu view has formulated the birth of an avatar as a cosmic law—that in certain definite circumstances God incarnates Himself; but Christianity considers the birth of its Christ as unique, quite in keeping with the exclusiveness of monotheistic claims.

Another interesting point is that just as the 'avatar' is one at a time, therefore, there is by inference only one God. Hence the avatar theory postulates monotheism in the numerical sense. Not only this; as no female avatar is contemplated, the conception of God behind the avatar theory corresponds in more than one point with semitic monotheism. Again when the person claimed to be an avatar is an historical person like Chaitanya instead of a legendary one like Rama or Krishna, the miracles associated with his life produce the same difficulty as in the case of monotheism; and for this, faith is found necessary. Thus the avatar religion comes very near monotheism in the technical sense.

It will be found that creative polytheism has attempted to absorb the avatar in its composite pantheon by superhumanizing him. It has attempted, for instance, to make just a deity of Krishna by giving him four arms, or of Datta by giving him three heads.

On the other hand, the polytheistic avatar theory, attached to anthropolatry, has pro-

duced a plethora of divine incarnations. There were times when every priest or king or the so-called spiritual preceptor or guru was believed to be a divine incarnation. As the holy man became after death a saint in Christianity, so here he became a sort of demigod. The Moslem idea of *pir* also fitted in here. There was even a thorough neglect of sectarian and creedal differences among Hindus in their regard for the holy men. These men seem to have been placed above sect and creed by popular devotion. The abuses incidental to such unsuspecting reverence have naturally roused opposition from reformers. But anthropolatry is an ancient religious trait and is deeply rooted in the mass mind. A careful analysis of mass psychology would reveal a hardly perceptible line of demarcation between the conception of a God in heaven who is a Person, and that of a human person believed, after his death, to have become divine.

(f) *Humanism*. If monotheism becomes anthropomorphic by necessity, polytheism is so by choice. And in the latter case it is possible to forget God for a while and extract only a human value out of the manifestations of the divinity. For example, when Homer makes the Goddess Thetis lament, foreseeing the death of her hero-son Achilles—

'Listen, sister Nereids, that ye all hear and know well what sorrows are in my heart . . . For after I had born (to me) a son noble and strong, the chief of heroes, and he shot up like a young branch . . . but never again shall I welcome him back to his home' *Iliad*, Bk. xviii.)—

he makes us forget the Goddess in the mother. Indian *puranas*, too, are full of lovely human stories of gods and goddesses which have received a simpler human touch in folk literature by the infusion of realism. There are stories of Shiva and Parvati, daughter of Himalaya, of their wooing and marriage and the home-life in Kailasa. These exist not only in legend and poetry, but also in sculpture (e.g., at Elephanta and Ellora). Then there is the prolific lyric poetry regarding Krishna in Brindavan among the cowherds and cowherdresses.

An essential part of polytheistic humanism centres in the feminine interest. The deity has often been conceived as mother. There are the Vedic Aditi, the mighty mother

<sup>1</sup> For example, the elephant-headed god of presumably crude origins has a Vedic name—Ganapati, a term applied by the Veda to Brahmanaspati, the Lord of Brahman or sacred lore; and the sacred plant *tulsi* (basil) is supposed to be the wife of Vishnu, a *puranic* and Vedic deity.

(*mahi mata*), and Saraswati with the sumptuous feed in her breasts. There is also Usha, maiden, but solicited by the worshipper as a mother by the child :

*shyama matur na sunavah*—‘May we be like sons of Thee, the Mother’.

(Rig., vii. 81. 4)

Then there are the *puranic* goddesses and the *tantric* conception of *shakti*, the mother power in the universe. Greek mythology has its Athene, corresponding to Saraswati, and the goddess of virginity Artemis, and others.

Monotheism is poor in respect of this wealth of human interest. The feminine interest is meagre in it. Heaven is an abode of males and of the sexless cherubim. In Islam there is mention of females in paradise, but they are not divine, and there is no mention of their individual personality as, for example, we find in Indian *puranic* account of *apsaras*. It was quite natural for a Christian monotheism, growing in the

atmosphere of Greek life, to have substantially repudiated its original semitic character by welcoming most of the gods and goddesses of paganism in the new garb of saints; and for the masses, accustomed to mother worship, to be devotedly attached to the worship of the Virgin Mother. Here, decidedly, polytheism with its rich humanity has virtually superseded monotheism.

From the above considerations it will appear that polytheism, in its non-fetishistic and creative form, has fertilized vast tracts of the civilized life of the world. In fact it was through the revival of polytheism and the naturalistic outlook on life with its inexhaustible imaginative creativeness that, at the end of a somewhat dreary if not dark period of the prolonged middle ages, Europe was reborn in spirit. Renaissance is, generally speaking, the triumph of Hellenism over Hebraism, or more characteristically, of a rich and prolific polytheism over artistically barren monotheism.

## KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

By A. DOROTHY BARRS

Few people in life differentiate between the words ‘knowledge’ and ‘wisdom’, ‘intellectual’ and ‘intelligent’. To many each pair is synonymous. Knowledge can be obtained by all people who use the brains and read or study other people’s opinions in books, or listen to the views held by those who lecture or teach. Knowledge belongs to the reasoning, logical, concrete mind. Wisdom is attained through inner enlightenment and often comes in flashes from some higher source which men call inspiration or the higher mentality. Intellectuals are everywhere in modern society but often these people possess narrow minds and miss the all-round intelligence of the so-called uneducated. Intelligence, like wisdom, is a rare commodity and sometimes those qualities appear in unusual people who come quite unexpectedly into one’s life; thereafter life is enriched by these contacts.

The majority of us possess a smattering of knowledge. We learn numerous things through the experiences that come to us in

life. The ideas we gather are developed according to our environment, our avocation, our hobbies. Some go through life with little understanding of the world in which they live; they have very little curiosity concerning the purpose of life, and so they pass their days in a state of darkness or ignorance. They are content to be born, to live, to reproduce their kind, to earn their daily bread, and to die; beyond these, which to them are necessities of life, their imagination does not go. For others this is not enough; they desire to know something of the world in which they live; of the universe of which the world is a part. These mental types seek to know the origin of life and form; of how things work and why. Today knowledge has accumulated so extensively and the mind of man has developed so rapidly that facts upon all known subjects can be obtained from many sources: museums, books, lectures.

Even among those who have emerged from the darkness of ignorance there are men and

women who delve into different departments of life's activities. Some concentrate on business, the accumulation of money, and power; this sometimes leads to greed, selfishness, and exploitation. Others use their mental capacities in unravelling the intricate problems of politics. If these people seek the welfare of humanity they can be of enormous value to the race. Frequently they are seized with the desire for power and position; they start intrigues with politicians of other nations; they play a game with finance and they, together with financiers, create conditions favourable for war. Another group, called scientists, use their well-trained minds for research and experimentation in the laboratory. They seek to know the laws on which this universe is based; they are ever bringing forward new theories which are accepted by the masses until some further thought and experimentation prove them to be fallacies, and a new hypothesis based on fresh facts is presented to the world. A great many experiments take place in the effort to find cures for various symptoms of disease to which humanity is heir, through wrong living and self-indulgence. Experiments are made with gases and other substances to find still more destructive methods for taking life when nations are at war; these are based on cruelty and suffering because animals are often used in this laboratory work.

Inventors think out machines and gadgets of all kinds; they take existing knowledge and with adaptations give something new to the world. Sometimes these inventions are used constructively and tend to make life simpler. Too often they are made to serve destructive ends and bring terror and misery to millions of people. There are many other ways of expressing ideas which have developed through the ages during which man has lived upon the earth.

Have the races of mankind shown wisdom through these multitudinous facts and accumulated ideas stored in the mind of man? Has man learnt to live wisely as a result of all the knowledge he has acquired? Looking at the world today can we say that man's learning and intellect have led to the benefit of humanity as a whole? Has the race found happiness and security, freedom from poverty, disease, sorrow, and other ills of life? What do we lack? Where have we gone wrong?

This brings us to the important questions 'What is wisdom?' and 'Are we expressing wisdom in our lives?' Wisdom is the bringing down of God-realization from the self within into the personal life and concrete thought. God-consciousness is the spiritualizing of our thoughts, desires, and actions in the material world. If man allowed the spiritual aspect of his nature to be the dominant factor, greed, selfishness, misuse of power, exploitation, and cruelty would no longer result from his activities in the many departments of human life.

Although man has gained so much knowledge concerning numerous subjects, he has failed to achieve that spiritual understanding which would enable him to use his mind constructively and wisely. Knowledge is easily gained and is possessed by many; wisdom is a pearl of great price and belongs to the few. How is man to achieve this change of heart and mind in order to bring into his waking consciousness the wisdom of an awareness of the self within?

There is a technique of the spiritual life which is hard to understand and difficult to practise. There are masses of instructions laid down in the world's literature upon how to control the senses; to use desire, emotion, and thought, rather than be used by them; to redirect the will; to realize at-one-ment with the God within, which is the aim of all mystics. The initial stages can be found through a teacher or a book but the path itself must be found and trodden by the aspirant alone. The inner experiences of the awakening soul are indescribable and, therefore, cannot be expressed, although many have made the attempt. There is a saying of the Chinese mystic Lao-tze, 'Those who know, tell it not; those who tell it, do not know.' Many who find this union with God come back from the solitude of contemplation to spend their lives in active service to humanity. It is soon realized that wisdom permeates the speech and action of these God-conscious men and women.

Until at least the majority find time, in the turmoil of life, to dwell for a period each day in the silence for communion and closer contact with the ever-living Light of the soul, the world as a whole cannot know wisdom. Natural intelligence leads the questing mind onwards and upwards to seek for qualities and gifts higher than the in-

ellect or material world can supply. With the awareness of the spiritual life, concrete thought, intellect, knowledge, call it what we will—which is not the apex of man's achievement—must take its rightful place in human life, as the handmaiden of wisdom which is the product of spirit. When man reacts to wisdom in all his activities, the conditions which make for war will be overcome, and he will be able to live in peace and plenty. Love will rule instead of hate; intelligence will supersede the intellect; and wisdom guide the hearts and minds of those

who rule and take an active part in the world's progress.

Has the human race not yet learnt the lessons of war and conflict at home and abroad? The saying of Christ that 'Those who use the sword must perish by the sword' surely applies to those who make wars and are, therefore, responsible for the untold misery and suffering which must inevitably follow, for war can never end war. The soul's awakening will show to humanity a better way of life, will bring wisdom into our lives, and will help us to build a saner and happier world for all.

## THE GOD OF SPINOZA

BY SWAMI PRAJNANANDA

There is only one substance according to Spinoza, and that substance is self-complete, self-subsistent, infinite, and all-embracing. 'The concept of God and the concept of Nature are for Spinoza identical with the concept of Substance.' This substance is the fundamental Reality and world-ground, eternal God, or in the beautiful language of Dr. Hoffding it can be said, 'Everything which is predicated of substance must also be predicable of God.' He is one and possessed of infinite attributes, something other than God Himself. Besides God no substance can be conceived, 'everything which is, is in God and, without God, can neither exist nor be understood.'

Spinoza's God is the primal cause of everything. He says in his *Ethica* : 'Clearly, therefore, God is one, that is only one substance can be granted in the universe, and that substance is absolutely infinite.'

There are four logical arguments which form Spinoza's ontological proofs for the existence of God. The first is : the conception of God as infinite substance is clear, and being infinite, God is possessed of an infinite quality, i.e. *existence*. The second is : there is no logical contradiction regarding the possibility of God's existence. So what is possible must exist. Thirdly, we the finite beings are never created by ourselves. There must be some one greater than and outside of us as our creator or designer, and He is the infinite

being, God. Fourthly, an infinite being will necessarily possess infinite power and thereby He maintains His own existence. Spinoza says that this world is an infinite gigantic creation, and if it be extended infinitely in time and space, the human conception will not be helpless without finding out God as its only cause. So, well has it been said by Dr. Windleband : 'Spinoza's definition of substance or deity, as the essence (*essentia*) which involves its own existence, is only the condensed expression of the ontological proof for the existence of God.'

Spinoza also did not deny the existence of the world process as he enriched his immanent God with *thought* and *extension*, the two attributes. Thought is the soul, mind or spirit, and extension is body or matter. But in spite of the two attributes of the one and unconditioned Absolute, he clearly subsumed that though God is the indwelling cause of everything and possessed of attributes, yet 'God, and all the attributes of God, are eternal.' 'Body and soul are not two in kind, but constitute one being looked at from two different sides,' as stated by Prof. Falekenburg. Material and spiritual are merely the two sides of one and the same necessary world process. It can be compared to a magnet with its two poles, positive and negative. As positive and negative poles are really the two extremes of one and the same magnet, so thought and extension,

spirit and matter are the two *modes* of one and the same substance God.<sup>1</sup> 'There is nothing real which is not both "extended" and "ideal". There is no "lifeless matter", no "immaterial spirit".' They assume two different manifestations only for the world process, otherwise they lose their separate entities in the one eternal ocean of the Absolute; or it may be put in the expressive language of Dr. Schwegler that 'everything individual, as finite, merged in the gulf of substance'.

Spinoza's God is an independent unity, and this God cares not for anything other than Himself. Spinoza himself has defined, in his *Ethica*, that God is 'that which is in itself and is conceived by itself'.

It is true that from the transcendental point the parallel modes of these attributes may be reconciled without entering into any contradiction with their Ground. The Hegelians like Erdmann and others maintain this view. They say that the attributes have no real existence in the Substance, they are assumed only to represent 'the subjective ways of understanding the world of things and minds in relation to God,' as Prof. Bhattacharyya puts it. But Kuno Fischer maintains a different view. He says that those two attributes should be considered as two real potencies or supreme powers, as two lines of divine activities. Prof. Adamson reminds us that this realistic expression can be understood only in the light of the more purely logical conception; otherwise 'consciousness and

extension are ways in which the sum of being is apprehended by us; but there is only one sum of being.' He says that like the waves of the sea, the modes have no existence in themselves; 'but they are the manner in which the infinite essence gives expression to itself.'

Whatever may be the controversies about the parallel attributes *thought* and *extension* of God, it is true that though Spinoza admits the two attributes of his unconditioned substance, he really does not admit their separate entities or existence apart from his Essence, the Ground; 'he treats them', in the words of Caid, 'as negative and illusory in themselves; he finds in God a ground of reality, of a self-assertive, self-determining, self-maintaining being.' He is absolutely self-dependent and unique. Being perfect and all-inclusive, there is nothing to be desired outside of Him. He is the cause of all, but uncaused Himself. But it should be remembered that everything other than God is illusion and error, or it may be said, as Prof. Norman Smith nicely puts it, that 'finite existences are illusions of the imagination that vanish when their essence is realized to be continuous with, and indivisible from, the one reality.'

The God is Spinoza is the Whole, and though He apprehends the capability of division, is yet absolutely indivisible. He is simple, indeterminate, and concrete. There is no limitation or finiteness in the Whole; He is one and identical in His essence and existence. All limitations die out or cease to exist in the undivided unity of God.

The manifold appearance is the outcome of creation or emanation. But it is an interesting thing to be noticed that this creation or emanation does not come out from God, but it remains in God. The manifold world is created out of finite things or *modi*, and 'God is their indwelling cause, not transcendent creator'. The God of Spinoza, then, is really the free cause. 'There is no different law by which God acts, but He Himself is a law.' The ground and the consequence—freedom and the inner necessity—are the same and

<sup>1</sup> cf. Swami Abhedananda, *Self-Knowledge*.  
<sup>2</sup> But here we should not overlook one of the weighty and ingenious comments of Dr. Haldar, as he says: 'The theory of Spinoza which reduces thought and extension to parallel attributes of the one substance does not help us. . . . Spinoza's modes of thought are, of course, not such a unity: they are only parallel to the modes of extension. But unless thought is conceived as a unity that transcends this parallelism, knowledge remains unexplained. It is not possible to attribute such a view to Spinoza though perhaps there are some indications of it in his theory.'

Prof. Joachim also supports it in the same way when he says: 'But, because they (i.e. thought and extension) are "ultimate" he cannot admit that in the Reality all the distinct characters are as such transcended and absorbed; so he is left with plurality "in" an absolute unity, and the metaphorical "in" leaves the conception totally unintelligible. . . . and by his failure to reconcile the plurality of the Attributes as ultimate characters of God with his transparent unity. Still we must not abuse the licence. For Spinoza . . . rises above the spatial way of representing the "relation" of the Attributes to one another and to God.'

<sup>3</sup> Prof. A. E. Taylor urges here: 'My objection to Spinoza's formula would be based not on what it asserts but on what it denies. It asserts, truly as it seems to me that God acts "by the law of his own nature", but falsely sets such action in God in opposition to "free action", as though complete identity of *voluntas* and *natura* were not itself the very ideal of perfect freedom.'

identical with the Whole of Spinoza. 'The relation of cause and effect, he (Spinoza) in the end shows, is not only identical with that of ground and consequent, but also with that of substance and quality.' This Whole of the eternal One is the highest knowledge; and from the realization of this knowledge arise the supreme joy and happiness for us.

But this realization or the method of arriving at the union of man with order of things, or with God is purely an intellectual process. It is called 'intuition' according to Spinoza. This intuition is not the 'intuition' or 'appception' of Kant, as intuition and even inner intuition, for Kant, are nothing but the representation of appearance, and are subject to the form or *a priori* condition of time; or in the words of Prof. Paton, it can be said that in intuition, according to Kant, 'the mind intuits itself, not as it is in itself, but only as it appears to itself,' and so it is phenomenal. The appception of Kant is also a power or faculty of mind which can be taken to be identical with understanding or empirical self-identity. Spinoza's intuition transcends even the '*conscientia*' of Descartes and the temporal 'I-consciousness' of Leibnitz. It can be called the God-intuition which, though involves a speculative intellectual process or vision, is the fountain of bliss sublime and divine unity with God.<sup>4</sup> This God of Spinoza is also different from the 'Thing-in-itself' of Kant; because the 'Thing-in-itself', for Kant, re-

<sup>4</sup> So Prof. Seth also admits: 'For Spinoza, with all his intellectualism, the moral and practical interest may be said to be supreme, since the great service which the intellectual vision of all things, in the light of their divine unity and necessity, renders to man is to free him from "the bondage of the passions"; for Spinoza, as for Socrates, virtue is knowledge.'

mains for ever beyond the reach of human intellect and appreciation, whereas the all-containing God for Spinoza can be intuited and known by the intellect, and He can be appreciated in the Divine Communion.

The divine flash of God-intuition of Spinoza is really other-worldly and sublime. It lies quite along the path of mysticism. The union with God or God-intuition, as Dr. Windleband calls it, is the 'theory of cognition, with its three stages, which sets *intuition*, as the immediate apprehension of the eternal logical resulting of all things from God, as knowledge *sub specie aeternitatis*, above perception and the activity of the intellect'.<sup>5</sup> 'The more we understand', Dr. Hoffding well concludes, 'that we ourselves and our conditions are determined by the infinite nature, by God Himself, who moves in us as well as in all things acting upon us, the more we regard ourselves not as a single, isolated, impotent being but as included in God and identical with Him. We feel pleasure in this thought, since it is the fruit of the highest activity of our mind, and pleasure too at the thought of the Being who is the cause of the joy with which knowledge fills us: Thus arises an intellectual love of God (*amor intellectualis dei*), which fills us with the highest peace. . . . Through that intellectual love of God, founded in our union with the absolute Being, our true nature is expressed; . . . we are immortal.'

<sup>5</sup> Dr. N. K. Brahma also says rightly: 'Intuition is "understanding at a glance and not by process". Spinoza says, . . . It springs from knowledge of the ultimate reality in its aspect of totality and eternity. From this standpoint Intuition seems to be an extension and consummation of reason and appears to be more intimate with reason than with sense.'

## ANSWER

BY TANDRA DEVI

There is something I want to write ;  
I have been wanting to write it for a million years ;  
But the image is not clear,  
And the words will not come.

There is something I want to find ;  
I have groped for it  
During interminable searches.  
Will it remain hidden for ever?  
And am I a dupe  
Of blind longings—  
Wild chance?

There is something I long to see—  
To touch and hear and make my own.  
Is it unattainable—  
A mirage—a dream?  
Or is it nearer than the blood in these veins,  
Closer than myself,  
Warmer than the handelasp of a friend?

Something is longing, beating, driving, hoping,  
sighing, rising within me.  
In this dark cloud called 'I'  
Perhaps the illimitable sun is hid.  
So dark, so dark the cloud—  
I ask 'Shall that sun ever break through?'

I call silently in pain,  
'Where—where is light,  
And when shall there be knowing?'

Millions have called thus since the beginning,  
And they will call on, for ever.  
Is this, then a game of chance,  
Or is it a mysterious pilgrimage?  
Speak! Speak! O Voice hid in stone—  
In stars—in my weary heart.

Shall death give the answer?  
And shall birth make me to forget again?  
Again and again, shall we forget, for ever?  
Wilt Thou not come forth to save,  
O Unknown?  
Or art Thou endlessly inexorable—  
Careless, cruel—  
Condemning Thy creatures to limitless uncertainty?

Somehow, somewhere,  
Will not mercy and love prevail?

Inscrutable Being—  
Thou—God—  
Answer!

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### REMINISCENCES OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

Sri Mahendranath Dutta, the younger brother of Swami Vivekananda, who leads a secluded life of study and meditation in Calcutta, met Sri Ramakrishna for the first time about sixty years ago, and several times afterwards. He has related some of his most interesting reminiscences of Sri Ramakrishna in his latest book in Bengali, excerpts from which, translated by Swami Jagadiswarananda, have appeared in the *Human Affairs* for February 1945. Referring to his first meeting with Sri Ramakrishna, he says :

My first meeting with him took place in a summer evening of 1882 or 1883 in the house of Sri Ramachandra Dutta,—my neighbour and relative. Hearing that the Paramahansa of Dakshineswar had come, a crowd of about fifty persons of whom I was one, gathered in the house almost out of curiosity. . . . All eyes were fixed on him.

He was very simple and unassuming like a villager. As I sat near him, I felt like keeping quiet. The assembled people felt a similar mood and sat silent. He himself was speaking a few words now and then. . . . His mind was always in such a high plane that when he used to speak, he brought down his mind by force from its dizzy heights. All present slowly got overpowered by his august presence and felt uplifted. After sitting for a while he began to murmur a song on Kali or Krishna. I had heard previously expert singers, but the song of Sri Ramakrishna was wonderfully inspiring. How sweet his voice was! He used to be absorbed so deeply in the ideas underlying the song that he appeared to float in the thoughts of the song, as it were. . . . Our minds got tuned with his mind. . . . I forgot hunger and thirst and also all my engagements. . . . His words were soft and convincing, forceful and intoxicating. When the time drew near for departure I felt a sort of strong attraction for him. This attraction was neither affection, nor love, nor respect; it was the heart's desire to be in his holy company. . . . A kind of intoxication which overtook us all in his presence lasted for full three days at least in my case. Though I followed my daily

routine as usual, I did not get any interest in them—my mind was away from them ; it was with Sri Ramakrishna, as if he had snatched it away. This, in short, is the impression of my first meeting.

Mahendranath Dutta particularly remembers the states of divine ecstasy (*samadhi*) in which Sri Ramakrishna would often be found, and giving a vivid description of one such state, observes :

Once in the house of Ramachandra Dutta, Paramahamsadev had come. . . . As soon as Sri Ramakrishna was garlanded he hummed a hymn in low tone and passed into *samadhi* . . . such a heavenly atmosphere of holiness and calmness, peace and blessedness was created that none wished to move his body or limbs. . . . Our breath became rhythmic and slow. Our minds lost their outgoing tendencies and turned inward. Those who never practised meditation in their life experienced a meditative mood. Influence that emanated from his body filled up the room like the fragrance of a flower, and overwhelmed us. . . . I have travelled in many countries of Europe and Asia, but I have nowhere come across such a strange man, such a God-intoxicated soul. To him God was all in all and everything else was trash.

In these reminiscences we get a glimpse of the sublime nature of Sri Ramakrishna's influence over the group of sincere young men who were gathered round him, knit together in the bonds of spiritual fraternity. Those who visited Sri Ramakrishna even casually became friendly, and talked of him whenever they met. Not infrequently there were instances when the whole night was spent in the parks or streets of Calcutta by friends deeply engrossed in talk about Sri Ramakrishna. Sj. Dutta reveals how, in a quiet way, Sri Ramakrishna exercised his liberalizing influence on the then orthodox Calcutta society. Interdining among the people of different castes became a common feature, at least 'in the feadings organized in connection with his visit'. Brahmins and non-brahmins dined together giving up their narrow caste prejudices ; for, Sri Ramakrishna had told them that as sincere devotees of the Lord they formed a class by themselves. They had no separate caste, and consequently were above social restrictions. A new fact narrated by the writer refers to the introduction into the then Hindu society, by Sri Ramakrishna, of the system of greeting each other by bowing in Indian style. Evidently such practice did not find favour with the anglicized section of Calcutta society of those days. Mahendranath Dutta adds that Sri Ramakrishna always set the example by bowing first, and even

persons like Girish Chandra Ghose and Keshab Chandra Sen had to learn this etiquette from him.

#### AWAKENED INDIA

Swami Vivekananda visualized the future of India as great and glorious, and declared that her awakening could be brought about by the sacrifice of a number of unselfish, thorough-going young men. He strongly urged the Indian youth to steer clear of superstitious orthodoxy and anglicized spirit, and develop a passionate love for everything Indian. These stirring words of Swami Vivekananda, spoken forty-eight years ago, are as vitally significant today as they were when they were uttered. Unfortunately the tendency to imitate Western forms is growing in India. And instead of assimilating the good points of other nations, we are doing the opposite. Western shibboleths, with their soulless materialism, are capturing the imagination of the youth of India while Indian ideals do not interest them any more. In his illuminating address to Simla Vyayam Samiti, Calcutta, Sadhu T. L. Vaswani said that he had found Indian young men imitating and becoming servile imitators of Western forms and institutions. Such imitation is useless from two points of view : In the first place Indians can never become Europeans or attain racial or national equality by copying European methods ; in the second place, it is impossible to imitate the Westerners *in toto*, for we cannot help being what we inherently are. It usually happens that the non-essential features of European society are more easily copied than the virtues, resulting in our degeneration and denationalization.

In order that India may progress towards her goal of freedom, Sadhu Vaswani believed there was need for three kinds of men whom he called, respectively,—volunteers, wanderers, and worshippers. According to him the volunteers were those who devoted themselves exclusively to the service of the motherland and who did not think in terms of religious denominations. The wanderers, he said, were to move from village to village, speaking to the village folk about India's cultural message and spiritual ideals. They should also impart secular education on purely national lines, stressing the importance of physical culture. The third group of men, named by the speaker as worshippers, was

needed to serve India, like true Karma-Yogis, looking upon service of man as worship of God. 'Awakened India' will have to play a great part in the new world order when the weary nations will turn to her for spiritual ministration. The future greatness of India

lies, as it did in the past, in her becoming, once again, the spiritual teacher of the world. In any progressive movement Indians will have to keep spirituality in the forefront and give up imitating the ways of foreigners.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**NATURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN HINDU PHILOSOPHY.** By S. K. SAKSENA, M.A., Ph.D. Published by Nand Kishore and Bros., Benares. Pp. viii 223. Price Rs. 7-8.

The cognitive relationship of man to his environment is unique, and nowhere does this unique characteristic display itself more forcibly than in his consciousness. And so, the problem of consciousness has occupied a most prominent place in all branches of philosophy, particularly in psychology and epistemology. In Hindu philosophy the problem acquires great value as it is related to the vital questions of bondage, release, and *brahma-jnana*. What is Consciousness? What is its essence? How does it differ from the *atman*? What are its relations to self-consciousness and self-luminacy? And above all how does it stand in relation to Unconsciousness? These are some of the questions which require to be dealt with from the Hindu point of view. And Dr. Saksena, the learned author of the treatise under review, has, in his doctoral thesis, attempted in a clear and forceful style to deal with the above problems and has succeeded in presenting 'a picture of the essentially and solely Hindu view of Consciousness along with the characteristic features which distinguish it in broad relief from its Western ally'.

The eight chapters of this well-written thesis contain a clear exposition of the ontological, epistemological, psychological, and transcendental nature of Consciousness; and of the relationship between the *chit* and the *achit*. What strikes the reviewer as most valuable in the book is the learned author's thorough, systematic, and critical estimation of the comparative values of the contributions made by different schools of Indian philosophy to the study of Consciousness. Of course, in dealing with *samvit*, *anubhuti*, or *upalabdhi* the author has had to pay special attention to Sankhya, Yoga and Nyaya-Vaisesika positions, and also to the views of Shankara, Ramanuja, as well as to those of Vachaspati and Vijnanabhikshu. Dr. Saksena's discussion of the self-luminacy of Consciousness in relation to mystic experience deserves special mention. The reviewer is tempted to say that a critical exposition of the Unconscious as understood by the psychoanalysts from the Hindu point of view will be particularly welcome from the scholarly pen of Dr. Saksena. But, then, I forget the author has set a limit to his researches by confining him-

self to 'an independent and critical study of the Hindu view of Consciousness in its individual and distinctive traits'. *Nature of Consciousness* is a distinct and valuable contribution to Indian psychological study, and the learned author has placed every student of philosophy under a debt of obligation to him by the timely publication of his valuable research thesis. It is now the duty of others to take up the work of synthesis for which we have brilliant suggestions in the book under review, specially in its epilogue. I have no hesitation in recommending this scholarly work to every student of comparative philosophy as a valuable and stimulating source book. *Nature of Consciousness* is a work without a copy of which no philosophical library, private or public, may be said to be complete.

P. S. NAIDU

**NEW LIGHT ON SRI KRISHNA & GITA.** (Vol. I). By Dr. MOHAN SINGH. Published by Dr. Mohan Singh, 13/2, Kapurthala House, Lahore. Pp. 102. Price Bound Rs. 7-8, Unbound Rs. 5.

Sister Nivedita in her preface to *The Cradle Tales of Hinduism* wrote, while discussing the problems connected with the personality of Sri Krishna, thus :

'We have thus to decide whether the Krishna of the Puranic stories here given, and the Krishna Partha Sarathi of the Mahabharata, are two or one. On the answer to this depends a great deal of history. If they are two, is Krishna Partha Sarathi new at the time of the last recension of the Mahabharata, or is he some ancient hero of the Aryan peoples, with whom Krishna Herakles is then fused, to become the popular vehicle of Vedic ideas? In the hands of highly trained Indian scholars—competent as no foreigner could be to apply the tests of language and of theological evolution—it is my belief that these inquiries might receive reliable solutions. I doubt that alien opinions could ever be much more than interesting speculations.' (Italics ours).

This dream of Sister Nivedita receives partial fulfilment in the volume under review. Dr. Mohan Singh of the University Oriental College, Lahore, has really thrown new and valuable light on Sri Krishna. We believe that the line of research he has intuitively chosen is the correct one, and it is also supported by the mass of invaluable references he has quoted in support of his views. He has developed clearly and convincingly the theory of avatars in Hindu theology, philosophy, and

mythology, and has proved that Sri Krishna is one and the same Divinity manifesting itself in various forms. As the Gita truly says,

*'Avajananti mam mudhah manushim tanum-ashritam, param bhavamajjananto mama bhutamaheshvaram'* (IX. 11).

With a courage of conviction rare in the ordinary run of Indian savants, Dr. Mohan Singh has brushed aside the patronizing yet puerile criticisms of Western scholars about the truthfulness of our *puranas* and epics, the *Vedas* and the *Gita*, and has delved into them, and brought out the truths hidden from the irreverent gaze of scoffing, yet ignorant, Christian scholars from the West.

Indian scholars and Western indologists will find much food for stimulating thought in this book. Every true Hindu will find in its pages an authoritative confirmation of the beliefs which he or she has sucked with the mother's milk. We wish Dr. Mohan Singh all success in his further researches in this direction.

The highly illuminating foreword by Sri Krishna Prem is a fitting introduction to such a fine book. We could only wish that the paper and get-up had only been more worthy of the subject dealt with.

**THE PEACOCK LUTE.** Edited by V. N. BHUSHAN. Published by Padma Publications Ltd., Bombay. Pp. 155 + xix. Price Rs. 6.

Here is a delightful anthology and one that is of special importance in the literary world of today. It is a collection of poems in English, by Indian writers. The poems are not translations but have been written directly in English, although the Editor has wisely made an exception to this rule in the case of four poets.

Indo-English poetry is described by the Editor as 'a full-blooded orphan languishing for want of proper care and recognitions.' This book

should do much to prove that this orphan not only deserves recognition but has an important function to fulfill. Some critics fear that the encouragement of Indian literature in English is detrimental to the cause of national literature. These critics have apparently not yet grasped the tremendous depth and breadth to which their nationalism must go. No one can be truly national who is not international as well. And if this is so in the spheres of politics and economics it is of far greater importance in the sphere of culture as expressed in religion, art and literature. To India and Indians it is of particular importance. For the time is upon us when India's voice shall be heard in the West. The modern Renaissance in India is leading to this as surely as the decay in Western civilization is preparing the ground for its reception. It is through channels such as this anthology of poetry that that voice will go.

If, from the technical point of view, some of these poems leave much to be desired, this is easily counterbalanced by their inner worth. In the words of V.N. Bhushan: This poetry 'Justifies itself by its strange beauty and newness of genius. . . . At times it is nerve of energy and strength of wing that are visible; at other times it is intellectual depth and intuitive suggestiveness that are supreme. . . . Indeed, the many facets of the best Indo-English poetry lend their admirer ampler flight into the realm where Truth, Goodness and Beauty tone into each other. . . .'

The publishers of this book tell us that it is the first of a series of anthologies of Indo-English literature. Those to follow will be anthologies of essays, short stories, and one-act plays. We welcome the idea and hope that those to come will equal this production in excellence of get-up and content.

IRENE R. RAY.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### SWAMI MAHIMANANDA

It is with the deepest sorrow that we record the passing away of Swami Mahimananda at Benares at 2-15 p.m. on Wednesday, the 23rd May. He joined the Ramakrishna Math at Belur in 1908. After a few years' stay there he went to Benares where he lived almost uninterruptedly till the end. He was a member of the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission and a Trustee of the Ramakrishna Math. He was noted for his self-help and sweet nature. His age at the time of passing away was over 81 years.

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SARADA PITHA

We have received a copy of the scheme and report of the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Pitha, Belur, for the years 1941-44. The

Sarada Pitha was started in the year 1941 as a new educational centre of the Mission in a building of its own near the Belur Math. It has now two main sections, viz. the Vidyamandira or College section, and the Shilpamandira or Technical section. The Management of the Sarada Pitha has in view the opening of a third section, viz. Tattvamandira, devoted to religion and philosophy, and the addition of an Agricultural branch as well as a Teachers' Training branch.

*Vidyamandira:* The Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira, an Intermediate Arts College, residential in character, and affiliated to the Calcutta University, came into existence in 1941. The College and Hostel are close to each other amid quiet and peaceful surroundings. The College has a decent Library and a well-provided Common Room. In addition to regular lectures by a

brilliant staff which included some monastic members of the Order, coaching classes were held in all subjects during the period under review. The boys took keen interest in debates and meetings, and ran a manuscript magazine. The Vidyamandira is run on the principle of the ancient *gurukula* system. As such they are under a healthy discipline, and attend to most of the household work. Regular religious classes were held and attention was paid to the spiritual training of the boys. The boys were encouraged to take active part in games and excursions, and in organizing dramas and special functions. The examination results were highly encouraging: Of 19 students who sat for the I.A. Examination in 1943, 16 came out successful; in 1944, out of 12 students 11 came out successful. In each of the years two secured scholarships. The Vidyamandira offers full-free and part-free studentship facilities to poor but meritorious students.

*Shilparamandira*: The Ramakrishna Mission Shilparamandira, started in February 1942, trained up a number of carpenters, electricians, and fitters. The average strength of the Technical section was 175 during the period under review. It is housed in a big building of its own, and has a large workshop and two hostels attached to it. The Management has a plan for starting three-year courses in electrical, mechanical, and automobile engineering, supplemented by practical training in workshops where small machinery of various kinds will be manufactured.

*Needs*: (1) For teaching science subjects in the Vidyamandira, a science section, equipped with a first-class laboratory, has to be opened. The estimated cost of buildings and equipment is Rs. 2,50,000/-. (2) Extension of the Vidyamandira hostel building, with a view to accommodate over 400 students, will entail an expenditure of Rs. 2,00,000/-. (3) To complete the College building Rs. 30,000/- are needed. (4) A spacious prayer hall, with shrine, for about 500 students will cost Rs. 50,000/-. (5) The cost of construction and equipment of a gymnasium, for 100 boys, will amount to about Rs. 15,000/-. (6) A sum of Rs. 50,000/- is needed for providing the boys with a large dining hall and for the construction of a kitchen. (7) A sum of Rs. 10,000/- is urgently needed to meet the cost of sinking a tube-well or excavating a tank for good water supply. (8) Acqui-

sition of land for the Sarada Pitha will cost Rs. 2,00,000/-. (9) To ensure stability of the institution, a Provident Fund of at least Rs. 1,00,000/- is absolutely necessary.

**SRI SARADA VIDYALAYA, MADRAS**  
(Ramakrishna Mission)  
REPORT FOR 1944

The Report on the working of the Sri Sarada Vidyalaya, Madras, one of the prominent educational institutions of the Mission for girls, for the year 1944, shows an increase in strength, and progress in the different schools under its management. The total number of admissions during the year was 871, and withdrawals 652, thus leaving a total strength of 1,810 at the end of the year. In June 1944 Standard VI was opened in the Girls' Elementary School.

A new section to teach instrumental music was opened during the year. Of the 72 girls sent up for the final examination in the High School, 59 were declared eligible for college course. In the Training School, 12 passed the T. S. L. C. Examination, and 12 passed the E. S. L. C. Examination. Classes in moral and religious instruction were regularly held for the pupils and the members of the staff. Opportunities were afforded for physical training and games. Other activities consisted of literary meetings, excursions, and organization of a scout group. There were respectively 25 and 40 inmates in the High School Hostel and Training School Hostel. The two important needs of the institution are: (1) Finding a permanent habitation for the several schools; (2) securing endowments for the Schools and the Training Section.

**VEDANTA SOCIETY, SAN FRANCISCO**

We have received the programme of work of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, San Francisco, for the month of February 1945. Of the bi-weekly lectures delivered by the Swami in charge mention may be made of the following. 'The Law of Karma and Reincarnation', 'The Nature and Practice of Inner Consciousness', 'The Spiritual Experiences of Sri Ramakrishna and their Significance to the Western Mind'. The last of the above-mentioned lectures was delivered on the occasion of the celebration of the birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna.

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. L.

JULY, 1945

No. 7



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वराञ्जिष्ठोऽधत ।”

“Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI SHIVANANDA

BELUR MATH, SEPTEMBER 1930

Afternoon—about five. Mahapurush Maharaj is sitting in his own room. He is far from being well. For some days past he has a cold and asthma. Now and then there is slight fever, too. To talk is a great strain to him. Nevertheless he is moved when people show eagerness to see him or talk of their troubles. He cannot keep himself to himself then. Forgetting his own bodily ailments he hastens to try and give them comfort and peace of mind. A retired judge has just come with his wife, son, and a widowed daughter. As they paid their respects to Maharaj, he asked them very tenderly to take their seats. There was a mat on the floor and they sat down there. After some casual talk the gentleman pointing to his daughter said, ‘This is my daughter. She has recently lost her husband. She is terribly upset. She has not yet been able to get over the shock. That is why I have brought her to you.’ Mahapurush Maharaj kept saying ‘Ah ! Ah !’ He remained silent for some time. Then he said gently, ‘This is the nature of the world, mother. Sorrow, suffering, agony—these are what it is made up of. Of real happiness there is practically none in the

world. And this cycle of birth and death no one can get away from. Man has no hand over it. God is the governor of these three phases of the world: Creation, existence, and destruction. At His wish births take place. He keeps you in the world as long as He pleases. And He takes you away too, when He pleases. You must know once and for all that God is the sole arbiter of birth, existence, and death. He sends you down to the world as father, mother, wife, son, or friend; He keeps you in the world binding you down with some form of attachment or other, and when it pleases Him, He takes you away from it. Until and unless man is able to grasp this idea firmly, he will be open to the torments of sorrow and grief. But when he is able to do so, he gets beyond their pale. Of course you must see that so long as your dear and near ones live, you leave nothing to be desired in your service to them. Otherwise when they die, that will be a cause for grief to you. But, of course, man’s sole business is not to grieve. He has so many other duties to perform. There are the worldly duties; besides, you must not forget to strive towards life’s goal. What good is there in

simply grieving? Life is not for that. You must try and go beyond birth, old age, and death; you must try and reach God, the Beloved. Then only is an end to all your suffering. "By attaining which (self-knowledge) man does not think anything else more precious and by resting where he is not moved even by the deepest sorrow." Even sorrows and sufferings you have to accept cheerfully as blessings from God, the Beloved. Unless you are utterly resigned to God, you cannot take them unflinchingly. For ordinary men the blows of the world are indeed too difficult to bear. Only true devotees can overcome them by virtue of their faith in God. Life's aim is to attain pure devotion, pure love, and spiritual bliss. Go forward towards God, mother. The more you go towards Him, the more will you get peace. Nothing in this world can give you peace. The feet of God are the only abode of peace.'

OCTOBER 1930

Afternoon. As it is a Sunday, there is a large number of devotees in the Math. Mahapurush Maharaj's room is crowded. He is talking with the visitors cheerfully. One gentleman bowing to Maharaj with great respect said, 'How are you, Maharaj?'

Maharaj: 'Quite well.'

Devotee (pathetically): 'But you don't look so at all. You definitely look ill.'

Maharaj: 'O, you mean my body? Well, yes, it is by no means fit. But I am well, though. I talk with people about God and sing about God, and I am perfectly happy with these things. "So long as Sita is able to repeat the name of Rama, she is well." So long as I can utter the name of Rama, I must say I am well. The purpose of birth is

to be able to repeat the name of God. If I can do that, I am content. Hari Maharaj used to say, "Illness is a matter of the body. Mind, you always remain in peace." A very wonderful remark! True; discomforts, hardships, or illness—these belong to the body. He who is within the body is unaffected by them. He is bliss itself. He resides in every body. And He is the real *Self* of everybody. We must know that *Self*. Because we do not know Him, we suffer.'

Devotee: 'All these are beyond us. We know only you. And we want you to be in good health.'

Maharaj: 'It is all right you want that. But I know I am not the body. My relations with you all do not centre round this body. They will survive even after the destruction of the body. Child, the body is transitory; only the soul is eternal and anything pertaining to it is eternal. However much you try, you cannot keep the body for ever. Rammohan Roy said so wisely in a song,

"With care you can preserve wood for a long time,  
But not your body.

Whose are you? Who are yours?  
Whom do you call your own?"

This ignorance you must get rid of. Man suffers, because through ignorance he identifies the 'Self' with the body. Do you know the way out? Knowledge of the Self—that is the way out. He is by nature Pure, Enlightened, and Free. And He is the *Self* of everybody. By knowing Him man goes beyond the pale of sorrow and suffering. That is why the Lord says in the Gita that once a man is established in the knowledge of the Self, he is not swayed even by the greatest sorrow. Once that supreme knowledge is achieved, man is as steady as the Mount Sumeru in all circumstances.'

*Have that all-effacing devotion to God which the moth has to the flame.  
In a single moment it burns itself to death, and shrinks not its body while burning.*

*Be as careful in constantly fixing thy devotion on God as the poor man is careful in preserving his guinea of which he is never unmindful and sees every moment that it is not lost.—Saint, Kabir*

## THE GOSPEL OF WORK

BY THE EDITOR

*Therefore do thou always perform thy duties without clinging to the results; so doing, one attains to the highest.—(Gita, III.16).*

### I

The tendency to action is inherent in all beings. The energy of motion, which we find in what we call the inanimate world, is evident in the world of life also. But purposive action or motion of energy towards desired ends is more and more plainly discernible in life as it ascends to higher forms. We are, however, unable to perceive any such purpose in the inanimate world. If at all we are to suggest a purpose for the existence of the material world it would seem to be only to subserve the ends of living beings.

This universe is a thing in motion. There is nothing that is not, in the eyes of modern science, kinetic. Similarly in the sphere of life, there is nothing that is not active or doing work. As the Gita says, 'verily none can ever rest for even an instant without performing action; for all are made to act helplessly, indeed, by the gunas born of *prakṛiti*' (Gita, III.5). Human life, however, seems to be on a different level from the vegetable and animal kingdoms. It is not possible to discuss profitably, in the present state of our knowledge, whether the laws of action we perceive to be working in the world of human beings are effective with regard to animal and vegetable life. For example, can we say with any degree of certainty whether plants or animals act consciously as human beings do with reference to premeditated ends? Are not moral aims pre-eminently human? There is no evidence that ideas of God and soul, heaven and hell, good and bad actions are met with anywhere except in human society. It is true that animals and plants share with men some of the biological characteristics that mark all life, such as nutrition, respiration, excretion, and reproduction and the instinct of self-preservation. But in man we find a unique development of brain power which has opened his eyes to spiritual problems that are unknown in other forms of life.

As a consequence of his unique place in the scheme of things man alone is able to strive after spiritual ideals. Man alone is not content to live unto the day, but seeks to peep into the darkness of futurity, to delve into the past, and to decide his present course of conduct on such knowledge as he is able to gather of this universe of time and space, and causation. But most of man's knowledge is concerned with the problem of getting on in this world. Science, politics, economics, and all other fields of human knowledge except religion confine man's attention to this life. But religion is unique in that it alone tries to solve some of the spiritual problems that beset every thoughtful person. It is nowadays the fashion to talk not of nationalism but of internationalism in politics, to conceive of the whole of humanity as one unit, and to believe that no nation can be happy or prosperous by itself, or live a life unto itself without affecting or without being affected by the rest of the world. But religion has taught a similar thing about this life. You cannot steer your course in this life properly without taking into account its nature and the causes that brought it into being, that keep it going, and that bring it to an end.

### II

What then are the special ideas that religion gives us, and which we do not get from the other sciences? Firstly, religion teaches us that this life of ours is but one of many, not only of lives spent on this earth as we know it now but also of lives spent in other realms beyond death. Secondly, the human soul is divine in nature, eternal and changeless. Thirdly, the human soul, though eternal, changeless, and perfect, somehow comes to forget its real nature and identifies itself with what it seems to see outside of itself and experiences the joys and sorrows of embodied existence in lives here and elsewhere. Fourthly, the way out of this entanglement in lives

of pain and pleasure, good and evil, lies in going back to its real nature, in understanding that it is really eternal, changeless, and perfect, and to get over the forces of ignorance which cloud its vision, and make it forget its real nature. Lastly, the means for getting over the forces of ignorance is by giving up lust and greed in all their forms and by developing the power generated by a life of chastity and non-attachment to the ephemeral things of the world and using it towards the attainment of a clearer understanding of the true nature of the human soul. Religion is realization of the true nature of the world and the human soul, the real self in all men. Hair-splitting discussions lead nowhere. Every man has to rise up from where he is, and by continuous discrimination about the nature of the soul as taught by religion, he will come to understand it in the fulness of time, and will be no more bound to the joys and sorrows of embodied existence.

Now there is a widespread feeling that this practice of religion is not possible unless a man 'gives up the world', as it is called. Ordinarily we are obsessed with the feeling of our imperfections and labour under the idea that God or the Self is something above and beyond this universe, and beyond our reach unless we give up all our normal activities and betake ourselves to the forest to meditate and pray for illumination. It is true indeed that, in the initial stages in the realization of God a withdrawal from the activities of the world for a time is often very desirable in order to strengthen one's convictions. As Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'A sapling has to be protected from cows and goats with a fence; but when it has grown into a tall tree the fencing can be safely taken away.' To certain types of mind, therefore, the shelter of a hermitage or monastery may be necessary to nurture the young shoots of the desire for God-realization. But a man's destiny is cast among his fellows and it is not by a permanent escape from contact with his fellow-men, but by an active life imbued with a sense of the reality of God and of the brotherhood of man that human beings can truly fulfil their destiny on earth. Indeed, we should go further and say that we should look upon our neighbour not as brother but as ourselves in another form. 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.' Or as Sri Ramakrishna put it, 'Jive Shivajnane seva,' i.e. service of God in the individual ought to be the basis of all

our activities. If the immanence of God is a reality, then He is in you, in me, and in all else. A life of true godliness is possible by working in the world in the true spirit of service of God or the Self in all things.

### III

It is true that a life of secluded contemplation may appeal to certain intellectual types of men in whom the mental and physical energies do not tend to run out much in emotion or in outward activities. But, perhaps, the majority of men are of the active 'somatotonic' type. To them a way to the highest has to be found which does not conflict with their natural, mental and physical equipment. For all such the gospel of work, Karma Yoga, is the easiest way, because it is in line with their natural tendencies. What then is the nature of Karma Yoga and how can it lead to freedom of the soul, to perfect bliss?

As we have already remarked, the essence of all religion lies in non-attachment, in not clinging to anything that is not oneself. Karma Yoga knocks down one of the most fundamental assumptions which make our lives ordinarily worth-while, namely, the almost universal idea that each man must be rewarded for his good actions and must reap their fruits, and must be punished for the evil deeds which he commits. Ordinarily human societies are based on the principle that each man should reap the fruits of his actions, and this is the basis of all morality. But we all see how unsatisfactory this principle is in actual life. Who does not know how often virtue goes unrewarded and vice goes unpunished? Is not the modern world full of examples of 'might is right'? And indeed are not most of our 'rights' born of and based on unholy might? What are wars but attempts by the more powerful to grab from others more of the land and wealth of this world? While society condemns the individual who robs another of his wealth, wife, liberty, or life, nations indulging in the periodical pastime of wholesale robbery, rape, murder, and enslavement of millions are considered 'glorious victors'. What about the multi-millionaires, landlords, and rajahs rolling in their luxurious beds, while millions are toiling for barely keeping body and soul together? The fact is that so long as human beings insist, whether individually or collectively, on

grabbing the wealth and power of the world because they have 'earned' it and fail to adopt a higher standard of morality, oppression and slavery, exploitation and starvation will be the lot of mankind in general. Karma Yoga shows us a way out of all this misery. It calls upon every individual to go out of himself, to outgrow his little self, and become perfectly unselfish by working with the idea of doing good only for the sake of benefiting the world and not oneself. It is a matter of everyday experience, that we attach ourselves to outside things, we cling to the products of our labours, and derive our joys as well as our sorrows from these. Karma Yoga says that it is possible to so live and act that we shall not be bound by the results of our actions.

#### IV

Patanjali in his *Yoga Sutras* says, 'Karma is neither white nor black for the yogi. For all others it is threefold.' The Gita also says the same thing in ch. XVIII.12: 'The three-fold fruit of action—disagreeable, agreeable, and mixed—accrues after death to non-relinquishers, but never to relinquishers.' Sridhara Swami comments on this verse of the Gita thus :

Disagreeable means life in hell ; agreeable means life in heaven ; mixed means life as human beings ; in this manner the well-known threefold result of disagreeable, agreeable, and mixed work accrues after death to non-relinquishers who cling to the fruits of their actions, as it is possible for them to do these three kinds of actions. But this nowhere happens to sannyasis. By the term 'sannyasi' here the real relinquishers of the fruits of action are included (along with the regular orders of sannyasis) because of the common factor of the relinquishing of the fruits of actions. In verse 1, ch. VI, and others, we find the term 'sannyasi' applied to the relinquishers of the fruits of actions, and because of the impossibility of sin in such *sattvic* souls and of their having offered up the fruits of their agreeable actions to the Lord, the three-fold fruits of action does not accrue to them.

The essence of Karma Yoga, therefore, is non-attachment to the fruits of one's actions. The first step is the giving up of all desire for the fruits of one's good deeds. It is so natural for us to claim credit for anything good that we do, and to want to be rewarded for it. And how naively do we try to disclaim (at least outwardly) all share in any evil deed that we do ! We have to become perfectly unselfish by giving up the desire for the results

of our good deeds. Then the correlated problem of the results of evil deeds will not arise, for, as Sridhara Swami points out, such unselfish men, such purified souls will become incapable of sin. Sri Ramakrishna also said the same thing; after relating the incident of his being unable to find his way back to the Dakshineswar temple from Sambhu Mallik's garden, because he was carrying a little opium taken from an employee of Sambhu Mallik and not direct from him, he observed, 'You see, I have completely placed myself in Mother's hands. That is why Mother is holding my hands. She does not allow my feet to stray even a bit from the right.' But almost all of us are little-minded and cling to the results of our good actions while vainly desiring to be freed from the effects of our evil deeds. The following story related by Sri Ramakrishna illustrates beautifully the imperfect nature of our practice of Karma Yoga.

Once there was a Brahmin who with great care and effort had laid out a garden full of flowering plants and fruit-trees. The plants and trees grew luxuriantly giving promise of early flowers and fruits, and the joy of the owner was very great. One day, finding the gate of the garden open, a young cow entered into the garden and in a short space of time had eaten away the tender shoots of the plants and saplings. The Brahmin, who had been away from his house on some business, soon came back and saw to his horror and dismay that the garden had been spoiled, and found the cow continuing its work of destruction. Full of anger, he took a stout stick and hit it with all his force, and being hit on a vital place, the cow fell down dead at once. Seeing this, fear seized the Brahmin. He thought, 'Alas, I, a Hindu, am guilty of cow-slaughter. There is no sin more heinous than this.' He had, however, learned a bit of Vedanta. He had read that the different sense-organs of men do their work deriving their strength from the different gods that preside over them. Thus, the eyes see deriving their power from the sun ; the hands do deeds deriving their strength from Indra, and so on. Now he remembered these things, and said to himself, 'Then, indeed, I have not killed the cow. By the power of Indra, the hand was driven to do the deed ; so Indra has killed the cow.' Reasoning again and again in this strain, he convinced himself that he had not killed the cow.

Now the sin of cow-killing came and was about to enter into the body of the Brahmin, but he drove it away, saying, 'Go, you have no place here. It is Indra who has killed the cow. Go to him.' So the sin went to Indra to catch him. Indra told the sin, 'Wait a bit, I shall come soon after interviewing the Brahmin. Then you may catch me.' Then Indra, in the guise of a man entered the garden of the Brahmin, and found him tending the plants and trees. He said, 'Aha, what a beautiful garden! How tastefully has the garden been laid out, each plant planted in its proper place!' He then asked the Brahmin, 'Sir, can you tell me who is the fortunate owner of this beautiful garden? Who has planted these beautiful fruits and flowers?' The Brahmin was highly pleased by the praises on his garden, and he said, 'This garden is mine. It is I who have planted all these beautiful plants and trees. Come with me and have a good look around.' Then talking of the beauties of the garden the Brahmin walked blissfully, till at last he suddenly came to the place where the dead cow lay. On seeing it, Indra was shocked, and asked, 'Oh God, who has killed this cow?' The Brahmin, who had taken credit so long for the laying out and care of the fine garden, was now in a fix to give a straight answer to Indra's question and remained silent. Then Indra, discovering himself before the Brahmin, said, 'Oh, you hypocrite, all the good things in the garden you have done, but the cow-killing has been done by me, is that so? Now take also the sin of killing the cow.' Indra immediately left, and the sin of cow-killing came and entered into the Brahmin's body.

## V

The fact of the matter is that Karma Yoga is as difficult as any other form of spiritual discipline, and only constant and long continued practice can bring perfection in it. As Swami Vivekananda says, 'to be an ideal householder is a much more difficult task than to be an ideal sannyasi; the true life of work is indeed as hard as, if not harder than, the equally true life of renunciation.' The Karma Yogi works, because this world is based on work, but the motive of his actions is only *lekhasangraha*, unselfish work in order to bene-

fit others. He rises above all personal motives for action. He does not act because he personally is likely to receive the reward of his agreeable actions. He does his duties irrespective of the consequences; pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat are equally welcome, for he neither desires the one nor avoids the other.

Now, it has been argued that Karma Yoga is impossible, because all men have perforce to act under the drive or impulse of some personal motive or other. But we have already pointed out that any work done with a personal motive will bring in its train its own fruits; that so long as we cling to the belief that it is we who do, we shall not be freed from the bondage of pleasure and pain. Karma Yoga wants us to understand that by giving up the fruits of our actions, by not desiring them even mentally, we reach a state when we realize that we are not the real doers, that really all work is done by forces outside of us, that we are the Self, the imperishable indweller in all things, unborn, eternal, not affected in the least by any action whether good or bad. As the *Brihadaranyaka* says: 'This Self is not rendered smaller by any wrong action, nor is it made bigger by any good action.' By the practice of unselfishness, by the constant attitude of non-desiring of the fruits of our actions, the veils of ignorance which blind us drop off one by one; motives, good and bad, towards actions give way to motiveless action. Then whatever we do will only tend to the happiness and freedom not only of ourselves but of others also. As the *Ashtavakra Samhita* says, 'One who acts in conformity with such thoughts as "this is done by the body and not by me, the pure Self"--such a one though acting, does not act.' Again it says, 'The pure sage, who moves like a child, unattached to all his actions, is not stained by any work that he does.' Truly does Swami Vivekananda say,

'Every good work we do without any ulterior motive, instead of forging a new chain, will break one of the links in the existing chain. Every good thought that we send to the world without thinking of any return, will be stored up there and break one link in the chain, and make us purer and purer, until we become the purest of mortals.'

# A BACKWARD GLANCE AT PRABUDDHA BHARATA'S FIFTY VOLUMES—A SEMI-CENTURY'S STRIVING IN THE FIELDS OF BHARAT'S CULTURE

By ST. NIHAL SINGH

## 1. THE GALVANIZER

'WATCH, my boy, watch,' said Mother. She took a pair of scissors, the edges ground very sharp. She turned up the circular wick in the tall kerosene-oil lamp then (late-eighteen-eighties) in use in the Punjab. This she trimmed with precision. 'See ! See !' she exclaimed, in her masterful yet musical voice, 'how even--how perfectly even—it is all round.'

The wick lit, she deftly fitted the tall, slender, tubular chimney over the round flame. Gently lifting the shade from the table, she adjusted it with care that even I, wee child that I was, could see it was extraordinarily great. 'These things are too precious,' she remarked, 'and the servants are too careless to be trusted with such expensive lamps. Your father obtained this from far-away Madras. It cost a hundred rupees. He values it very highly. We must take good care of it.'

A moment or two later she went to another part of the house. Because of her talk, the flame fascinated me. Suddenly an overwhelming desire surged within my heart. What if I were to turn the wick higher—ever so little higher. Would the light become brighter?

I turned up the wick—ever so little. The light became brighter. There could be no doubt of it.

Having, in my own estimation, done better than Mother, I proceeded with the experiment. She was still somewhere indoors. No one was near, no one to say Don't.

The wick went up—and up. I had not been at that, to me a new game, for two or three moments, at least so it seemed to be, when there was a sudden crash. Chimney and shade lay in a score of splinters. A piece had flown against my cheek—had actually singed it. I began to cry.

'Playing with fire,' commented Mother, more sad than wroth. She had instantly taken in the situation upon hurrying into the

room, attracted by the noise, or was it my cries?

So had I, her junior by nearly twenty years. A law of Nature had leapt into my understanding. It had lodged there. From thence forward I was to know that heat accompanies light—that that heat has power—that that power is often explosive in character.

Had the Swami Vivekananda's personality lacked power while his eye was lit with knowledge of all the universes (I use the word in the plural to make it the vehicle of our conceptions), this magazine might not have existed to-day nor would I write about its life and work for the Special Number that is being issued to mark its semi-centennial anniversary. Illumination, by itself, would not have sufficed for his mission upon earth in the circumstances in which the Motherland was placed at the moment of his advent.

India then was in *samadhi* (a trance) super-induced by a magic wand of alien manufacture waved by materialism masquerading as science. The glazed eyes were, for the nonce, incapable of perceiving any ray, however brilliant. A peal of thunder was needed if there was to be an awakening. Need there was also for the flame of power that consumed dross. Dross had gathered within the breast of the Motherland as she lay prone in the trance of 'inferiority complex.' Slave psychology made us oblivious of our ancient culture. Some of us even derived joy in deriding our ancestors' achievements.

If the Master had the dazzling brilliance of Indra's sky pyrotechnics, he also had the peal of thunder and the crash and consuming heat of the rain-god's bolt.

This I realized, even as a schoolboy. He visited the Punjab less than a decade from the day when I had experimented with light and found that it is accompanied by heat—heat that may be explosive in character.

Only persons alive to this twofold quality of that great being can interpret his life and living word with any degree of fidelity and force. This little dynamo that he had

charged and named the *Prabuddha Bharata*—Awakened India—in 1896, some six years prior to closing his mortal eyes on America's Independence Day (July 4th), must inevitably partake of that twofold quality. Its record must be judged by this exacting standard.

Has it shed illumination from the flare of culture—our culture—any culture?

Has it generated power to liberate the mind and to set free the soul for purposes of the highest individual endeavour—endeavour directed not merely towards personal profit, be that profit no other than *moksha* (salvation), but also towards social good?

## 2. THE FIRST IMPULSE

I have lying upon the desk at which I am writing a volume. It measures  $10\frac{1}{2}$  by  $8\frac{1}{6}$  inches. It still bears upon its face marks of having been carefully tooled by skilful hands. Its owner, it is quite evident, set great store by the 24 issues of the magazine he thus sought to preserve from the ravages of time. That they have lasted 50 years since the first of them was shot out of the inky bed of the press, most probably worked by hand, is doubtless due to his forethought and the loving care given by persons into whose safe custody he committed it prior to journeying to the bourne beyond mortal ken.

Our climate, with its drought alternating with wet weather, either usually extreme, is cruelly hard upon the works of writers and printers. It serves as a most efficient instrument for the Lord Shiva whose function it is to dissolve all that has been compounded of matter, so that his brother-deities—Brahma and Vishnu—who fashion and foster new forms—may have ample material to work with.

A few of the pages within the volume are split longitudinally, in two. The substance of some of the others has perished in places, particularly at the outer edges and the corners.

Yet just the sight of these moth-eaten, tattered pages whirls me back a half-century. The snow strewn by Father Time lies heavily upon the thatch, still noticeably thick, over my head: but, in fancy, I am again a schoolboy. His knowledge of the rulers' tongue, thanks to the pains taken by his sire, is precociously large. He nevertheless must have

recourse to the lexicon every minute or two and then understands only a little of the *Prabuddha Bharata* (as the magazine is called), of which that sire, religious-minded for his early manhood, is a devoted reader. In point of fact I occupy a chair in the verandah fronting the eternal Himalaya; but, in imagination, I am none-the-less seated in a small town in the Punjab lying a few miles to the north-west of the place where the Satluj quits its hard, rocky, Himalayan bed for the soft, pliant mud that its waters are to fructify.

The best remembered page is the title. Sometimes it was white, often faint green in the issue as it was received, month by month, from Madras. It bore upon its face a scene that etched itself upon my memory. I do not need to look at it in the volume lying alongside me, in order to describe it.

A *bor* (Punjabi for banyan) tree sprawled across the page. Its trunk was large and vital looking. Living ropes were twisted round it. Brown garlands were they—garlands that had become embedded in the bark. Others hung from powerful boughs. They reminded me of tassels depending from the bridegroom's turban as he rode, in joyous procession, towards the blossom-decked leafy bower where he was to be united in holy wedlock to his bride.

Near the foot of the trunk sat a sage. His hair, long as Nature meant it to be, was coiled upon the top of his head in a knot that we Sikhs call *joora*. I can even now hear Father calling my attention to that fact.

The beard fell over the *rishi*'s breast, bare, as indeed was his whole body down to the waist. From the tight *kach* (the Sikh word for knickers) protruded his legs. Only up to the knee were they visible, however. The foreleg and feet were hidden by the haunches as they reposed upon the *mrig-asana* (deer skin) upon which he was sitting.

A tiny stand that folded up, (of a kind even now in use) touched an edge of this skin. Upon it reposed a book, wrapped in cloth—a clear indication that it contained food for the soul, it was sacred. A half inch or so away was the water-vessel—the *Karumandala*—that holy men carry, originally made from a calabash (double-gourd).

The sage's left hand rested in his lap. The other was held up as if he was emphasizing some point or points.

Two boys sat in front of the *rishi*. Their bodies were bare save for the *dhoti*, its folds elaborately indicated. They were apparently all eyes.

In the 'middle distance' two deer stood, both majestically antlered, one at a little distance from the other. 'They, too, are listening to the *rishi*,' my father's comment, echoes in my ears. I also recall that I said that they must have been pets—they were, at least, utterly unafraid.

Under the tassels hanging from the foremost bough stood a couple. They puzzled my boy mind. The man was wearing a hat that, in terms of information later acquired, was of straw plaited into crown and brim. Alongside him was a *mem* (corruption, no doubt, of madam—ma'am, in the patois of the London house servants, as I was to discover in time). Dressed as every British woman theretofore seen by me, she held an umbrella (the term parasol had not yet entered my sadly limited vocabulary) with the ferrule firmly resting against the earth.

Right behind them were trees similar in species to those from which I had often plucked dates—soft, black, juicy, syrup. In among the palms were thatched huts. One of them looked like a miniature *duk* (travelers') bungalow. (Many of these and even the large houses in which the *sahibs* then dwelt, with their *mems* and children, were roofed with straw).

Even with my mind only half-formed, I realized that this couple did not fit into the scene in front of me. I felt that these two somehow did not 'belong' there. Why were they gaping at the sage and his students, as to me they seemed to be doing?

An idea that I regarded as brilliant entered my head. They were, perhaps, putting up at the *Duk Bungalow*. Out for a stroll, they had come upon the *rishi* and were trying to listen to what he was teaching his pupils.

My father, who may have read the explanation offered in one of the early issues of the *Prabuddha Bharata*, explained the riddle in language that even my boy mind could comprehend. What the *rishi* was teaching, I was told, was good for everybody in the world—not only for Indians. 'The *sahib* and his *mem*, were listening to it as those Madrasis were, because of this. These two foreigners

would profit from it as would Indians—Indians from north and from south, from east and from west.

Father told me of the sage who, at that very moment—some time in 1896-7, most likely that very winter—was expounding Indian thought somewhere in *Wilayat* (a term comprehending Europe and America). He was a great Teacher. The language he used was simple. Yet it was both vivid and vital. It was as attractive as was his personality.

This magazine had been started by one of the sage's devotees. His name was B. R. Rajam Aiyar. He was a Madrasi.

\* \* \* \* \*

The magazine spread his Swami's (Master's)—Vivekananda's—message to humanity. In terms of money it was as cheap as it was valuable in content. It cost only Rs. 1-8-0 a year. An issue worked out at two annas including the postage.

A few months after I had become conscious of the magazine (October, 1897) the great Swami himself came to the Punjab. His personality and phraseology lifted us—adolescents and adults alike—off our feet. Of that upliftment I sought to give a picture in my *India's Awakener: The Master and the Magazine*.<sup>1</sup>

His coming to us vivified my interest in this monthly visitor to our home. A few years later I was living in Sarnath with the Anagarika<sup>2</sup> Dharmapala (afterwards the *Bikku*—<sup>3</sup> Devamitta), who had been with the Swami at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in September, 1893, and loved and honoured the great Indian. In a letter addressed, in the summer of 1896 from (I believe) London, to the Editor of *Prabuddha Bharata*, he welcomed the birth of the magazine with the warmth that was characteristic of him—by far the most inspiring personality born in modern times in Sri Lanka (as I am glad her sons and daughters wish her to be known henceforth):

<sup>1</sup> The *Prabuddha Bharata* for December, 1914, pp. 430-435.

<sup>2</sup> The homeless one.

<sup>3</sup> After his people's (Sinhalese) fashion, Dharma pala used to leave out the aspirates. So did the *Tathagatha*, he would say. The Buddha gave his message to the masses, not to the select few. He used, therefore, the *prakrit* (vernacular) of the lowly, not the *Sanskrit* (refined language) of the cultured.

'All hail to the *Prabuddha Bharata*. I send herewith one pound sterling in the name of the Maha Bodhi Society for the *Prabuddha Bharata*. May the mellifluous fragrance purify the materialistic atmosphere of fallen India! Your efforts will be crowned with success and *Prabuddha Bharata* will surely awaken the lethargic sons of *Bharat Varsha*.'<sup>24</sup>

In the Bikku's library I found in 1903 or 1904, the back numbers of the *Prabuddha Bharata*. I read and re-read them. Much of

'*Prabuddha Bharata* for July, 1896—inside of back cover, printed in red.'

that which to me had been obscure during my early teens in the Punjab was easily comprehended in my early manhood in Sarnath.

I am one of that band, now I fear very small, who has known this magazine through its entire life. This, I suppose, is the reason for the kindly, capable head of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati—the Swami Pavitrananda—prevailing upon me to prepare this account for the semi-centennial memorial number.

(This part of the article is reproduced from the Golden Jubilee Number of the *Prabuddha Bharata*. The rest of the story will be continued in succeeding months.—Ed. P. B.)

## THE CONCEPTION OF JIVA OR THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL IN THE ADVAITA VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

BY PROF. DINESH CHANDRA GUHA, M.A., KAVYA-NYAYA-TARKA-VEDANTATIRTHA

It is a matter of common experience that at times we seem to feel within ourselves that we are infinite in essence without any limitation whatsoever. Our spirit soars high up and we for the time being seem to realize the immense potentiality of our own nature. Though it cannot be denied that our body of flesh and blood is limited by space and time, yet if we carefully look into the essence of our nature we feel that we are beyond spatio-temporal limitations. For how can we otherwise satisfactorily explain this and other similar experiences of ours that we are the same knowers of a particular cognition the like of which arose several years back and that also in a different place in ourselves? Verily, the knower cannot be the gross body as it is in the nature of a continuous flux and as such the past body which cognized the particular phenomenon is no longer present now to know the similar object. To know one thing to be similar to some other previously experienced object necessarily presupposes the existence of one and the same knower existing in different places and in different points of time. Hence it follows as a necessary corollary that the cognizer is something changeless, at least for the duration of some points of time, as opposed to the ever-changing gross body. A little reflection will similarly reveal to us that the sense organs including even the mind can-

not be the knower of the said cognition. If the body, which in spite of its constant change is at least of the same kind as the former one, cannot cognize the above-mentioned phenomenon, how much more improbable is the case with mutually dissimilar sense organs to experience the fact particularly in a crucial instance like the one in which it so happens that one sense organ later becomes defective and yet we can recollect some previously cognized object. Certainly the recollection of some thing is not possible unless it is previously cognized by the same agent. The mind which is nothing more than an instrument of knowledge cannot by its very nature become the agent of the cognition, for the instrument is always something different from the agent. On this metaphysical problem volums can be written after the past master minds of our country, but certainly this is not the proper place to deal with that highly intricate issue.

The question now arises : What then is the real nature of the individual self? To this the Advaita Vedanta comes forward with a very bold answer. The answer even if it be considered to be the outcome of a mere poetic imagination without any ground whatsoever in reality, will certainly deserve our serious consideration at least for its practical bearing on our life. Can any sane man ever deny

the good effect of bold and right thinking on our mind and, consequently, on our whole being? Advaita Vedanta identifies the individual self with that principle which, to quote the speech on gramophone record by Mahatma Gandhi, 'creates, dissolves and recreates.' That principle, according to Advaita Vedanta, is nothing but Truth, Consciousness, and Bliss taken as a single entity. Hence the nature of the individual soul also is Truth-Consciousness-Bliss. The capital letters used in mentioning the nature of the self are to signify that the principle is something different from that which is commonly known by those names. To bring this home to us the traditional teachers of Vedanta philosophy have explained the terms सत्यम् (Truth), ज्ञानम् (Consciousness) and आनन्दम् (Bliss) in the negative process as something different from भिट्ठा (false), जडम् (unconscious) and दुःखम् (grief). So also the hyphen marks placed between the words are to impress on us that all the three concepts refer to one and the same entity. In other words, the ultimate principle which is designated by the term Truth (with a capital letter) is identical with Consciousness and Bliss. In order to signify this relation of identity the Upanishadic texts have mentioned the three words with the same case-ending.

It is the unanimously accepted view of the philosophers of the grammarian school of India as also of Indian logicians, that when words are mentioned with the same case-ending attached to them, a sense of the relation of identity arises in one's mind on hearing those words uttered, provided the connotations of the terms are different, though the substratum of the connotations is the same. For a proper understanding of the main subject matter it seems necessary to exemplify and discuss very briefly the above-mentioned theory. To mention a common example reference may be made to the judgement, 'The jar is blue'. Here the connotation of the term 'jar' is jarness, and that of the term 'blue' is blueness. Of course by saying 'jarness' and 'blueness' the common and essential attributes of the object, the jar, and of the object denoted by the term 'blue' are meant. In the above-mentioned judgement the term 'blue' evidently denotes an object having a blue colour. Otherwise there can be no possibility of any identity

between the object designated by the term 'jar' and that denoted by the term 'blue'. Because if the term 'blue' here means blue colour instead of meaning an object having that colour, how can we consistently think that the object, the jar, which possibly is made of clay, is identical with the attribute designated by the term 'blue'? Evidently the quality signified by the term 'blue' is not identical with the object having that quality, for the simple reason that the two objects are different from each other, and things different from one another can never be identical. Now blueness certainly means blue colour in this particular context, because the term 'blue' here, as stated above, does not mean blue colour, but instead it refers to the object having that colour. Therefore blueness which may elsewhere be nothing but the common and essential attribute of the quality designated by the term 'blue' can, as a matter of fact, mean nothing but the blue colour itself in this particular context. For the term 'blue' can equally be predicated of many things other than a jar. If so, what can possibly be the common and essential attribute of all objects having blue colour except the blue colour itself? The word 'jarness' in its turn means the essential and common attribute of all jars, and that attribute is something different from the blue colour itself, because jars may be other than blue, and as such the blue colour can never be the common attribute of all jars. Hence we find that the connotations of the two terms, 'jar' and 'blue', are different, though the substratum of the connotations in this particular context is the same. Therefore the judgement, 'The jar is blue' means the relation of identity existing between the object jar and the object having blue colour. Similarly, the terms Truth (सत्यम्), Consciousness (ज्ञानम्) and Bliss (आनन्दम्) have their different connotations though the substratum of the connotations is the one and the same ultimate principle which possesses diverse characteristics. The view of the philosophers of the grammarian school and of the logicians regarding the meaning of the judgement is unanimously accepted, with slight modifications, by all the other schools of Indian philosophy.

Now let us return to the main point at issue. The Upanishads tell us that the indi-

vidual soul is identical with the Supreme Soul. In their anxiety as it were to impress on us the identity, the Upanishads have not only mentioned the words, denoting the individual soul and the Supreme Soul (which, as stated above, is nothing but Truth, Consciousness and Bliss) with the same case-ending attached to them, but have used some other words as well to signify the identity, thus leaving no room for any doubt whatsoever.

But the question of questions is this : How can we blindly accept the verdict of the Upanishads that the individual soul is identical with the Supreme Soul, and as such is nothing but Truth, Consciousness and Bliss in the restricted sense of the terms? Traditional philosophers of the Advaita Vedanta school answer this question by saying that they do not ask anybody to accept the view blindly. They simply invite the seeker after truth to test the validity of the statement at first hand by experimenting with it in his own life, and accept it only when he is convinced of the veracity of the statement in the light of his own intuitional experience. Unlike the philosophies of some other countries Indian philosophy is a strict discipline of practical life even in its most unnoticed and obscure aspects; it is not mere table-talk or intellectual gymnastic having no bearing whatsoever on one's practical life. Accordingly the past philosophers of India laid great stress on verificatory experiments of the theories held by them. A theory untranslated into practice in one's everyday life is meaningless to them. The practical bearing of the theory on our everyday life, we are further reminded, becomes strengthened after the realization of the true nature of self; and this realization does not come through our sense organs but, on the contrary, it transcends the range of the sense organs. But to make oneself fit for this intuitional realization of the self is an extremely difficult task. Peculiar is the way through which one attains this realization. Mere study of the scriptures or work is not sufficient for this. The Supreme Soul is metaphorically described as revealing itself to one who is fortunate enough to be chosen for the purpose. What we are to do in our turn is simply to keep our body and mind thoroughly pure and stainless, so that in due course the

realization of the true nature of our self will flash upon our mind. Then and then only will a man be convinced that the true nature of the individual self is Truth-Consciousness-Bliss.

Various teachers of Advaita Vedanta philosophy have defined the individual self in various ways. Generally speaking, there are two schools of Advaita Vedanta : the followers of Vivarana come under one school, and those of Vacaspati Mishra under the other. According to the Vivarana school the individual soul is the reflection of consciousness on ignorance (Avidya) limited by the mind and its potential attributes. The followers of Vacaspati do not recognize the reflection of consciousness; on the contrary, they hold that the individual soul is nothing but consciousness limited by ignorance. The two theories of these two schools are respectively known as the theory of reflection and that of limitation. Innumerable are the ways in which numerous teachers of each school have defined the individual self. Inquisitive readers may do well to read the *Siddhantaleshasamgraha* by Appaya Dikshita in which most of these views are recorded in brief.

The individual soul which is eternal and all-pervading is one and the same according to some, and many according to others. The latter view is more authentic as it is accepted by Acharya Shankara, Padmapada and others. The theory of a single individual soul has this serious drawback that in the event of one soul attaining liberation, all the world becomes liberated, which is contrary to our experience. The Upanishadic texts also go against that theory. The *Vedanta Aphorisms* of Vyasa also do not seem to support the theory of one individual self.

It should not however be understood that the plurality of *jivas* means that the *jivas* are many in reality. What is intended to mean is that the plurality is only phenomenal (*vyavaharika*). It is the plurality of the limiting adjuncts of consciousness which accounts for the phenomenal plurality of souls.

If we consider the different theories with an unbiased mind we shall find that there is an underlying unity among them inasmuch as the diversity of this universe is unanimously accepted to be superimposed on the

Supreme Consciousness, and as such the individual soul is nothing but Truth-Consciousness-Bliss in reality. Hence it is said that the individual soul is self-effulgent. It is only due to the beginningless ignorance that we have come to suffer manifold troubles. We are all the sons of our heavenly Father who is nothing but Truth-Consciousness-

Bliss. 'I and my Father are one' is the universal statement of all seekers after Truth in all countries and in all times; and it is gratifying to note that Indian sages were the first to realize the Truth, and to declare it before an afflicted world in unambiguous language that carries conviction to every unsophisticated mind.

## THE ROLE OF THE UNCONSCIOUS IN MAN'S LIFE—A STUDY IN MOTIVATION

By PROF. M. S. SRINIVASA SARMA, M.A.

The concept of the unconscious mind plays a peculiarly important part in the development of modern psychology. In the popular view it serves to explain strange occurrences in hypnosis and trance, and is commonly regarded as the agency of clairvoyance and thought-transference. To it are attributed marvels of perception and information, hysteria and multiple personality, the cure of disease and the reformation of character—all this without a clear understanding of the process involved. It is, therefore, our first duty to avoid popular, superstitious usage of the term, and understand its meaning in a definite psychological way. Properly defined, it is a valuable interpretative and constructive concept.

There are in normal everyday mental life many facts of sensation and perception which may popularly be called 'unconscious'. Thus objects seen with 'the tail of the eye', the faint murmur of distant voices, or the ticking of a clock, the pressure of our clothing, the slight muscular strain and relaxation of breathing, the total bodily 'feel' termed conaesthesia, the temperature of the atmosphere—these and other items of mental content must be distinguished from the clear centre of conscious process. Secondly, the complex processes of memory, imagination, and reasoning point to an unconscious realm of the mind. Where and how does past experience remain, so that we can recall it in the form of conscious memory? Where do the multifarious items of our knowledge reside when we are not using them? It would seem indeed that the whole

business of remembering implies the existence of a huge reservoir of unconsciousness. Similarly imagination, both in its ordinary and artistic forms, appears to well up from some obscure depth of the mind. What exactly is poetic inspiration? Many an artist has borne testimony to the strange way in which the works of his genius flash into his mind with a compelling force of their own. Whence do they come? The answer is—the unconscious. Thirdly, our likes and dislikes, sympathy and repugnance, anger and fear, pride and embarrassment, and a host of other emotional impressions owe their peculiar force to processes which take place below the threshold of awareness. Thus there is neither mystery nor contradiction in the concept of the 'unconscious mental life'.

### *The Unconscious*

The mind of man is a highly complicated thing. It has rightly been compared to a vast sea in which the glittering surface represents what we commonly call the conscious mind, while the unseen and much larger body of water beneath represents the unconscious. As the under-layers of water are constantly mingling with the surface water, and changing its content and temperature, so the under-layers of the unconscious are for ever altering and modifying our conscious thoughts and actions.

Psycho-analysis is the study of man's unconscious motives and drives as shown in various nervous disturbances, and in certain manifestations of everyday life in normal

individuals. It has been demonstrated that the manifold symptoms of the neurosis result from unfulfilled desires often extending back to the earliest years of childhood. These desires not only influence the formation of character-traits, but likewise are responsible for many forms of nervous illness. Psycho-analysis as a psychological theory originated with Sigmund Freud, a doctor of Vienna, whose classic investigations were first published in 1895. The greatest service rendered by Freud has been to demonstrate irrefutably the unity and continuity of all mental life. Psychic life is a continuity in the sense that at any given moment it is determined by all that has previously happened and all that is happening. Nothing is accidental in the psychic realm. 'There is no chance', says Freud, 'in the psychic world any more than in the physical'. The human mind is a single, organic, unitary entity. The unconscious and the conscious are but its two aspects both acting and reacting uninterruptedly throughout life.

The unconscious contains, according to Dr. Jung, (1) the primary or racial unconscious, and (2) the secondary or personal unconscious. The racial unconscious contains instincts and other universal drives, impulses, and desires which are shared by us with all other human beings, and to a certain extent even with the sub-human creatures. If you ask why I am afraid of the dark and why the mysterious thrills me, the answer can be given only in terms of instinct. Likewise, if you ask why acquiring wealth, or dominating over others, or inventing a new machine, or discovering some new truth should be universal, we can only reply that it is due to instinct. Again if you ask the reasons for falling in love and for many of the actions particularly of the thrills and blushings and emotions peculiar to that state, one must look to instinct. Thus the racial unconscious contains the forces that maintain and shape all the life of individuals and societies; and in them we are confronted with the central mystery of life.

The personal unconscious contains the marks of upbringing and personal experiences from birth onwards. We may not remember all that we did and all that happened to us in the past; but we are what we are as a result of all those past experiences. A man's present life thus is affected

by the influences of the racial unconscious which he shares with all other human beings as well as by his own personal unconscious, though it may very well happen that these dynamic influences are hidden as it were from him. Though hidden and obscure, they are, all the same, operative within him.

#### *Motive—The Psychic Cause*

That all conduct is motivated is the fundamental principle of psychology. A cause in psychology must be a psychic cause; and a psychic cause must be a wish or motive. For us to live means a vast range of activity. We wish to do a thousand things that we can never do. Physical incapacity, mental incapacity, limitations of our environment, mutual conflict between one wish and another, opposition from other people, incompatibility with the prevailing moral standards—all these compel us to give up many of our wishes. Consequently innumerable wishes must be laid aside; and some, resisting, have to be suppressed. Renunciation thus becomes the order of the day! But what becomes of the unfulfilled wishes and rejected motives? Do they tamely submit to the decision and efface themselves altogether? How happy man would be if that were the case!

The mind attempts to find a refuge and free itself from mental conflicts through repression. Experiences which are distasteful to the individual are often put out of the mind. Refusal to consider rejected wishes and attitudes, and openly to face humiliating experiences leads to a kind of forgetting in which conscious recall becomes impossible. The repressed system of experiences, or *complex*, continues to exist and manifest itself in various ways. Since the sex instinct, and, to a less extent, others also are repressed by the customs and conventionalities of civilization, these unconscious forces find expression in subtle and symbolic ways. Oddities of behaviour, automatisms of action, unexpected slips and turns of speech, misplacements of objects, forgetting of names, places, and obligations, hallucinations, phobias, and especially dreams have an indubitable significance as evidence of repressed wishes. These 'Freudian wishes' constantly strive to thrust themselves up above the threshold and to obtain normal satisfaction;

but the effort fails because in the crude form they run counter to the normal standards of social life and civilization. Social disapproval, moral teaching, religion, and other environmental forces produce in the individual a censorship which is ever alert to prevent the wish from manifesting itself.

### *Defence Mechanisms*

The unconscious, however, may escape the vigil of the censor and express itself in a number of ways. Slips of the tongue or pen often declare in unvarnished fashion what we believe in the inner recesses of our minds. Once I had to write a tactful letter to my brother on a family matter that was very unpleasant. When after finishing writing it, I read it over, I found to my horror that the letter 'r' in the word 'brother' was dropped in the address 'my dear brother', and it read as 'my dear *bother*!' Forgetting to do any unpleasant bit of work is not so innocent or accidental a lapse as we usually take it—it is very often the unconscious cropping up to do us a good turn by giving us an excuse for not doing what our more refined sense of propriety obliges us to do.

Hidden complexes manifest themselves in a number of ways even in the case of people usually considered normal. These are called 'defence mechanisms' which hide from the conscious self the true nature of the motives and impulses that operate in the unconscious. 'Projection' is placing guilt or blame upon some one else. In a motor accident it is human to shift blame and responsibility to the other party. The student who fails in the examination blames the paper-setter, or the examiner, or his own ill-health at the time. The belittling of others or blaming them saves one's face. There are persons who constantly project blame for their shortcomings upon others, and who habitually undervalue the achievements and success of others. These reactions are 'face-savers', that is, prestige-preservers.

'Compensation' is another defence mechanism in which a man with a guilty conscience about his private life may try to compensate for this defect by throwing himself wholeheartedly into some form of social service. The thwarting in one direction may lead to a compensatory activity in another. Freud points out that great work in music, litera-

ture, painting, science, religion, and philanthropy has been repeatedly accomplished by persons thwarted in their love-life. Achievement in one activity bolsters up one's self-respect; and this partially makes up for the loss of self-esteem resulting from the thwarting of another line of conduct.

Another means of elevating one's self-esteem in the face of some limitation or frustration is through a process of 'identification'. Some adults habitually talk about their distinguished relatives, about the famous people they have met, about their eminent friends. Such an identification of one's self with worth-while people bolsters up self-esteem, and compensates for a sense of inferiority. In the novel and on the screen we identify ourselves with the hero, and thus lead an imaginary life of luxury, success, and excitement; and the story lifts us out of the commonplaceness of our humdrum existence, and provides an imaginary escape from real difficulties.

### *Rationalization*

'Rationalization' is the mental process by which we substitute an explanation that is personally agreeable for the real one which is uncongenial. This substitution is not deliberate. The explanation is given in all sincerity, and is regarded as adequate and true. This false reason conceals the true motive from the individual himself. It is interesting to note how the unconscious exploits our physical weakness to excuse mental and moral deficiencies. A splitting headache or a sudden attack of malaria is a common complaint of the student who is faced with an examination for which he feels himself but ill-prepared. Or take the case of a man in hospital who knows that when he comes out he will have lost his job. He is afraid to face this situation, and dismisses it from his mind for the present. He does not consciously say to himself, 'I cannot face the world, so I will not get better'; for, reason tells him that it is an unworthy and foolish manner of dealing with the situation. But the unconscious conflict becomes so acute that a solution is imperative; and the mind then works on the body in such a way as to cause the symptoms of illness to persist. Jealousy, mean tyranny, slanderous gossip, petty quarrelling, certain types of invalidism,

irritability, various forms of morbid cruelty—all these are everyday manifestations of the repressed wish for self-assertion welling up from the unconscious. In many a marriage celebration in India there are found people ready to pick up a quarrel for trifling reasons. The true reason is that where many people meet, there are some who feel their inferiority to others; and the quarrel they create is caused by a desire, unconscious of course, to get attention directed to themselves. An enormous amount of rationalization prevails now in all belligerent countries. Non-combatants, male and female, the individual, the firm, the corporation—all see themselves in a rosy glow as 'doing their bit', and 'carrying on' and 'helping to win the war'. They do not consider it decorous to realize that they are doing more interesting work and getting better pay than ever before! The person who says, 'I give freely and look for no return,—I wear myself out for the sake of others,—the money that I get for my work is nothing to me,—I do not want gratitude,' is being hoodwinked by his unconscious, and is performing an elaborate rationalization.

#### *Self-knowledge*

Nowhere is the ancient counsel 'know thyself' more appropriate and more momentous than in dealing with the basic instincts which so vitally affect our lives. 'Ye shall

know the truth and the truth shall make you free', was not said in vain. Acute self-examination will lay bare the recalcitrant factors in our character. We must not only admit our faults whether they are pugnacity, vanity, or pride; we must also accept as part of our psychological make-up the instincts and emotions which give rise to such faults, and utilize their ineradicable forces for worthier purposes. A satisfactory outlet is what is technically termed '*sublimation*', a method by which the instincts are uplifted and purified of their original crude tendencies and set free to go onward, to create, to be refined, and to be of general usefulness. Freud says that 'civilization has been built up under the pressure of the struggle for existence by sacrifices in the gratification of the primitive impulses; and it is to a great extent for ever being recreated, as each individual successively joining the community repeats the sacrifice of his instinctive pleasures for the common good'. It is essential to the welfare of the community that the energy belonging to the instincts should be utilized to the utmost in channels which subserve social ends. Ernest Jones rightly points out that 'the weaning of the child to external and social interests and considerations which is the essence of sublimation is perhaps the most important single process in the whole of Education'.

## THE REAL SELF

By M. D. SAGANE, M.A., LL.B.

### I

Man has got a physical body, energy and life. In addition we find in him will, desires, feelings and ambitions. He possesses mind, heart, reason, intelligence and consciousness; and beyond all this we find in him the individual 'I', that is, the self ever subsisting in him. In whatever we feel or desire, in whatever we enjoy or suffer, in whatever we think or imagine, and in whatever we do or dream, there is this 'I', the 'self' pulsating through all the while. That 'self', that 'I' is in front and behind all whatever we are conscious of.

The above proposition is a generalization derived from the facts of common knowledge. At any rate, a little thought would clarify the facts as well as the generalization. Man possesses organs of sense and action and they function in their respective spheres. Our eyes see, ears hear and noses smell. Likewise when the mind does the function of desiring and the will of determination, the man, the 'I', the 'self' within him says, 'I desire,' 'I determine', 'I will'. Thus it is found that this self appropriates various actions apparently done by the parts of his body or by his mind, etc.,

and ascribes them to himself. The question, therefore, arises as to who or what this 'I', the 'self' is. Is the man or the self the same as parts of his body or the body as a whole? Is he the mind or the will, etc.? Is he identical with any or some or all of them jointly or severally?

Examination of this question discloses another important fact. Observations show that though this self does at times call the actions of the parts of the body and of the mind or will as his own, at other times he is careful enough to distinguish himself from these functionaries. For, many a time he says, 'There is pain in my hand. My brain is full of thoughts.' He thus avows himself as separate from the body, mind, intelligence, etc. It is important to note that he also indirectly expresses his title of possession and ownership over them. He goes even further and claims mastery, rulership or dictatorship and the power of control and direction over them. He maintains that these various functionaries are his agents only and that they act according to his orders. These claims of his are sufficiently clear and pronounced at times when he says, 'I shall exert my will to that end. I shall concentrate my mind on that subject.' It may, however, be observed that on some occasions he complains of the insurrection of these, his agents or possessions, and of his failure or incompetency to control them. These occasions arise when his desires or undertakings meet with failures, defeats and disappointments. Such is the attitude of man or the self towards the functionaries mentioned above.

His attitude towards life is similar; for his expressions and actions concerning life are not at all different. Sometimes he gives vent to such expressions as 'I am alive. I shall die'. Herein he identifies himself with life. But at other times he pronounces himself differently as when he says, 'I am enjoying life. I am tired of my life. I shall make my life happy.' In all these he clearly distinguishes himself and shows that he is something different and apart from life, that life is his possession only and that he governs and directs it.

Thus it will be seen that so far as man's expressions are concerned they point out that

he, the self, is distinct from and not the same as body, mind or life either singly or jointly.

## II

Perhaps there may be none and, if at all, there may be a few only who would in all seriousness take as true the inferences that have been drawn from the expressions of man, as related to the physical body, life or mind, etc. Originally these inferences should be trusted as logical or rational. For, after all a man is endowed with reason and uses words to express his innermost thoughts and intentions. He is not, therefore, expected to speak without any meaning with respect to the physical body, life or mind. He expresses himself in the aforesaid fashion not once or twice but times without number. His expressions must, therefore, be credited with logical reasonability in regard to his thoughts, ideas and attitude towards the physical body, life, mind, etc.

Nevertheless we shall explore if there is any corroborative evidence regarding the truth of the inferences that man, the self, the 'I' is not the body, the life or the mind. And if we make an earnest attempt to understand the problem and reason out impartially the various things that we experience, know or hear from reliable sources, we shall find that there is plenty of such evidence.

Let us for the present consider the question of body only. A realistic glimpse of the truth that the self is not physical body is obtained, among other things, in the phenomenon of dreams. We shall, therefore, examine that phenomenon. We all know what a dream is. It is, therefore, sufficient to describe it succinctly as a train of thoughts or pictures. Dreams fall under two divisions, one is 'day-dreams' or waking dreams, the phenomenon of which occurs when we are wide awake. The other is night dreams or 'sleep dreams', the phenomenon of which occurs when we are asleep. The former kind is named as 'reverie' or 'brown study' also; but the term 'day-dream' is best as it is very descriptive. The latter kind of dreams is referred to only as 'dream', for we all understand by that word 'sleep dreams' only.

Waking dreams are either voluntary or involuntary. We shall speak of the voluntary class only, as what can be said about the involuntary dreams may not be acceptable at this stage of study. In both kinds of

dreams our physical body is at rest, particularly so in the sleep dream. But while the waking dreams are the results of conscious efforts, sleep dreams are not so at the time of their occurrence. This is the one important difference between the sleep dreams and the waking dreams. Further, except in the case of very advanced souls waking dreams can produce or present only the known realities with variations or otherwise, but not the unknown realities or prophetic visions; while sleep dreams can produce not only the known realities but in some cases unknown realities and at times prophetic visions also. There is yet a third difference. Psycho-analysis can explain all (voluntary) waking dreams. It can also explain a large proportion of sleep dreams; but it cannot explain all the dreams, particularly the prophetic visions. That is to say, all waking dreams can be explained by attributing them to the interplay of imagination, mind and its desire; but all sleep dreams are not so explainable.

For our immediate purpose we shall take up for investigation waking dreams and only such sleep dreams as can be explained by the theory of psycho-analysis. They will of course be concerned with the phenomenon of known realities as stated before. But by this method our investigation will be simpler, and the conclusions that may be drawn from the facts obtained in the investigation, will not be objected to by the psycho-analysts.

### III

As already pointed out all dreams are either thoughts or pictures or both combined. These thoughts and pictures have generally a relevant sequence but sometimes they may be disjoined and utterly ludicrous in their presentation. Whatever that may be, one thing that is obvious in both kinds of dreams is that the man is insensible to or unaware of anything except the dream-phenomenon. In the sleep dream this unawareness is natural and understood and does not cause much surprise, for the body is actually slumbering. But in the case of waking dreams such a state is rather worthy of note. It cannot but excite curiosity, for the man is all the while wide awake. Once in the full swing of a waking dream, the man does not see : visitor that comes near and in front of him although his eyes may be wide open. He does not hear

the ordinary sounds or a talk going on near him although he possesses sound ears. A mild blast of wind or a little chill does not make impression although his body may not be covered. The insects sitting over his body and even their bites are not felt by him. Everyone of us has had waking dream at times and therefore knows that the described state of facts is absolutely correct. Each of us realizes that he is unaware of the ordinary happenings in his immediate vicinity when he is in a brown study or is thinking deeply.

During the waking dream state the eyes, the ears, the nose and the skin continue to be as they were before. They are alert and not asleep. Their physical constitution as also the mechanical contrivances by which they function are there intact. Therefore the physical body and its organs must be having the impacts and impressions of outside objects, and there must be action and reaction between them. But the man, the self, the 'I' does not feel, perceive or experience them. Though wide awake he does not see with his eyes, he cannot hear or smell, he cannot feel the effects of weather changes or get annoyed with the nasty insects. This is something contrary to the ordinary experiences of the truly waking state. There must be some explanation for it. The direct and the simplest explanation is that it is so because the man, the self, the 'I' is not the physical body. Had he been the physical body, he would have felt the impressions and the effects made on the body by the surrounding objects. He would have been conscious of them had he been the physical body.

### IV

Having examined the waking dream state and having come to the conclusion that the self is not the physical body, we shall proceed to the phenomenon of sleep dreams.

Very few, if any, may not have seen dreams while asleep. But the vast majority must have dreamt, at least on some occasions during their sleep. In dreams we generally see things as we see them in the world of the waking state. We walk, we talk, we eat and see trees, houses, rivers and various places. We hear melodious music and come in contact with fine specimens of art. We discuss many things, and at times the subject of dreams itself. We meet with disasters, disappoint-

ments and feel sorry and harassed. We are sometimes joyous and full of emotions. In short we see, feel, think and act exactly in the same manner as we do in the course of the waking state. Many a time all the occurrences in a dream are of a nature with which we are familiar; but at times they are of a different nature. When a man wakes after a dream, he ponders over or speaks of the dream and of the things he saw, felt and did in it.

It hardly needs repetition here that what we see in dream is simply a drama composed and enacted by the mind and that the man, the self, who saw it, is the same who existed before and exists after the dream. It is also equally unnecessary to point out that in the sleep dream the self is unaware of the ordinary impacts of outside objects on the body (as in the waking dream) and that he thereby shows that he is distinct from the body. But to make understandable what will follow shortly hereafter, two things that emerge from the dream experiences must be clearly enunciated. One is a simple truth, namely, that the physical body of the man in the waking or sleep dream does not take any part whatever in the dream drama. A man may see his hand hurt and bleeding in the dream, but the hand is found unhurt and all sound when examined after the dream. He may find himself drowning, and yet after the dream the body is as dry as before. The second proposition is that the man was not asleep although the body was asleep in the dream. The body (including the brain) was undoubtedly sleeping and was at rest, except for the automatic actions such as breathing and circulation of the blood. But the self, the 'I' was neither sleeping nor unconscious. Had the self been sleeping or unconscious he could not have seen the happenings in the dream and would not have enjoyed or suffered from them just as the body did not; much less could he have remembered or spoken about them after getting awake. These facts conclusively prove that the self was conscious and not asleep when the dream presented itself. What was sleeping was the body and the brain were slumbering, but the self was awake throughout—as awake as before and after the dream and sleep. Thus it is apparent that the self is not identical with, but is distinct from the body. Another fact to be noted is

that even in the dream state he distinguishes himself from the body and counts it as his possession just as he does while awake. Surely he is not the physical body; nor is he the subject of sleep.

## V

Our investigations into the phenomenon of dreams furnish us with reasonable data to hold that the self is not the physical body and support the conclusions drawn from the expressions of man about his body. The finding arrived at is in consonance with the science of psychology also. To put it in psychological phraseology one would say that in the dream state the self withdraws his consciousness from the physical body. He cannot, therefore, be conscious of what actually happens to, before or in front of his physical body. He is then engrossed with his mind. His consciousness is at that time centred in the mind and its working. He can, therefore, be conscious only of the train of thoughts or pictures that his mind raises before him or rather he makes his mind raise before him. The self, the 'I' is in the world created by the mind and not in the physical world. Hence he could be conscious of the former only and not of the latter. He cannot perceive or feel or know the ordinary impacts of the physical world. Impacts severer than the ordinary type are needed to shake off his dream and make him conscious of the outside world.

Of whatever worth the above psychological explanation may be to a learned man or to a man above the ordinary, it may not be sufficiently intelligible to an ordinary man. It would exceed his understanding. For he would not, at this stage, be able to grasp the intervening factors of consciousness and its entering or focussing on the one hand and its withdrawal on the other. But whatever has so far been stated in plain terms would certainly lead him to conclude that the man, the 'self' is not the physical body. This fact he would express in his ordinary simple way by saying that the dreaming man's mind is not in his body and goes somewhere outside for the time being. Even so he realizes that the man is not the physical body though he may be identifying himself with the mind.

## VI

It may be said that the conclusion that the self is not the physical body has got a more

solid basis in the dream phenomenon than in the mere expressions of man. But even then it cannot be convincing; for it still remains a matter of speculation. For the conviction of ordinary men something more substantial is needed. We shall, therefore, pass to the examination of a more concrete phenomenon, and in that we shall find, not only that the self is not the physical body but also that it is not life even.

Now let us suppose that a man's leg has got some bad disease, or that it is badly injured; or that it is pestering in such a way that it is likely to be dangerous to life if allowed to continue in that state. Let us further suppose that a doctor advises amputation of the leg. In such circumstances the man feels no hesitation at all in getting rid of his leg. He gets it amputated to save his life. He cuts off a part of his nose, if needed, at the risk of appearing ludicrous and grotesque. If his lung is bad, he collapses it. That is, the self, the 'I' within the man is prepared to lose parts of his body to save his life. To save life he would be prepared, if need be, to lose all the body except that much portion which guarantees and is consistent with the existence of life. That is because life is so much dearer and nearer to him than the body. But when life itself becomes irksome, very painful or in any way miserable, he desires for death. He who clung so fast to life, now wants to discard it and actually discards it. If there is anything in the world which a man prizes and loves most, it is his life. For the sake of life he is prepared to suffer privations, undergo hard and bitter trials and forgo everything else. But even that beloved life he is prepared to discard and he actually discards it!

We come across instances of this type now and then in the ordinary walk of life. The cases in point are of persons who commit suicide, with the intention and hope of escaping acute physical or mental pain or impending disasters, dishonour or disgrace. Many distinguished persons have committed suicide; persons who ought to be credited with sufficient sense have committed suicide. They cannot be said to have committed suicide in a fit of insanity, unless we define insanity as that state which precedes every suicide. Then again there is another class of cases of this nature. History cites several cases of persons who liked to give up and actually gave up life

in the pursuit of high and noble ideals whether individual, national or universal. Many historical personages who suffered execution, could have easily avoided it by simply renouncing their religious faiths or political ideals. But they preferred to renounce life itself and sacrificed it at the altar of religion or politics. They preferred to lose life rather than faith, honour or character. Clearly therefore they loved and prized these things more than the physical life. A man gives up that which he loves and values less, that which is less nearer and less akin to him and retains that which he loves and prizes more or that which is nearer and more akin to him. This is obviously because he finds more happiness in those things which are dearer and nearer to him than in those which are not so or are farther away from him. Evidently then the martyrs considered and prized their faith, religion, character, honour and ideals as more akin to them and therefore retained them in preference to the physical life. They undoubtedly loved life and would have liked to retain it; but then by its retention they would have lost what they loved more. The preservation of life would have been at the sacrifice of things which were more valuable to them than life.

The above instances of suicide or martyrdom strongly prove that the man, the 'self', the 'I' is distinct, not only from the body but also from life, which activates it. They also show that the man does not consider that he ceases to exist with the destruction of his body or life and that he thinks that he continues to exist even after death. In the above-stated circumstances he feels and thinks that he would be happier if he quits life or life quits him and hence he ends his physical body and life.

The attitude of the self towards the body and life and his conviction about his separate entity is clear from the above. To explain it in simple and explicit words, a simile of pets would be apposite. Man cares for and fondles his pets so long as they give him pleasure, tolerates them till they are not positively a nuisance and abandons or shoots them when they become dangerous to themselves, to him, to the society, or to those other things which he loves and values more. In the same way the self retains the body or life so long as they are a source of pleasure or

happiness, tolerates them so long as they are not positively and predominantly a source of unhappiness, and discards them when they cross the last point and grow unbearable and inconsistent with his happiness. The self regards the body or life, and as a matter of fact, any other faculty or functionary, as his possession only, distinct and separate from him. He retains them so long as their retention is not a source of unhappiness, and discards them no sooner than he knows that any more association with them will be positively inconsistent with the happiness he likes to have. Clearly, therefore, the self, the 'I' within, is neither the physical body nor the physical life. He is distinct and apart from them both.

## VII

Our examination so far has disclosed that the principle underlying all these phenomena is that the 'self', the 'I' is not identical with the physical body or life, and that it exists even after their dissolution. If we carry on these investigations on the lines followed till now, we shall also know that the self is not the mind, neither the intellect nor the reason. But this point need not detain us here. There are some questions which arise immediately on the conclusions that we have drawn and they must be dealt with first. Some of them are, 'What then is the self who subsists even after death? How does he live or exist? What is the condition or form of his existence?'

The last question is very pertinent and more intimate, though not more important than others. We are accustomed from birth to death to the physical objects. We are subject to and aware of their limitations. It is therefore difficult for us to think outside these limitations and to conceive that anything can exist without the background of physical matter or without the framework of physical form. A scientist familiar with the electron theory would be in a position to imagine and also to admit the existence of the self after death (as spirit) but would conceive it as existing in some form produced by a combination of physical electrons. But a conception of 'self' beyond this would be impossible for him. He would argue that the forms that can be photographed must necessarily be composed of physical matter; for, his efforts in the laboratory have not yet discovered any matter different from the physical. To him the

existence of the self without the basis of physical matter is, therefore, an impossibility. At the most he would say that the existence of the 'self' after death without the basis of physical matter is merely an imagination, a mere creation of the mind.

But experiences of the dream state resemble the experiences of our active life. In dreams we walk, talk and do so many things. While in that state we see ourselves walking with legs, going to and residing in a far off place; we witness many scenes and embrace even our departed beloved. All this we see and do even when our physical legs are lying completely at rest, our eyes are closed, our physical body does not move even a little and is in fact asleep, and although our beloved died and their bodies crumbled and returned to dust long long ago. With all these facts and with all this knowledge, the man, the 'self' actually acts and sees things as stated above; and they are as real to him, then and for the time being, as anything can be during the active waking life. What is the explanation for all this? What are those legs and those things?

The only explanation for such phenomena which, without offending common sense would be satisfactory, is that the eyes, the ears and the friends, etc. of the dream are creations of the mind. All that we see in a dream is undoubtedly the creation of mind. This, put in other words, means that the legs, eyes, ears and friends of the dream state are mind legs, mind eyes, mind ears and mind friends.

The above plausible explanation requires a further pondering. These legs, friends, etc. of the dream are not unreal simply because they are of mind. They are as real in the dream as the physical legs and friends are in the conscious wakefulness, and this we have seen already. Further, since they are creations of mind, the mind must have produced them out of something. They could not have sprung up or been created out of nothing. One cannot conceive a physical thing coming out of nothing. There must be, and always is, some substance, physical or mental, from which they come into existence and assume the form they possess. The physical objects of the physical world must be formed or created out of physical matter. And as a matter of fact, we all know that the things that we see and perceive through our physical organs (that is, all physical objects) are made of physical stuff. Our physical legs are made of physical blood,

physical flesh and physical bones, etc. which again are made of other physical materials and these in their ultimate form are nothing but physical electrons. In the same way things that we see and perceive through mind, that is, all mind objects must be made of mind stuff. Our mind legs must be made of mind blood, mind flesh and mind bones, etc. which again must be composed of other mind materials and these in their ultimate form must be nothing but the mind electrons. In the physical world all objects are made of physical matter. So in the mind world all objects must be made of mind stuff necessarily. Unless we admit the correctness of this proposition, the whole thing would be ridiculous and absolutely outside the pale of ordinary common sense.

The dream state is then a creation of the mind. It is in fact the mind world, just as we have the physical world. In the physical world the self wears physical form, that is, the physical body and sees physical objects, which are all made of physical stuff. In the same way, in the mind world the 'self' puts on mind body and sees mind objects which are made of mind stuff. To the self the physical world appears real so long as he focusses his consciousness on the physical world. When he withdraws his consciousness from there, the physical world ceases to exist for him. When he projects his consciousness into the mind, the mind world begins and it is as great a

reality to him as the physical world was. In the physical world the self exists in the physical body. In the mind world he exists in the mind body. In a dream state which is the mind world, the man, the 'self', the 'I' dwells in the mind body or *sukshma sharira*. The *shastras* say that the self exists or resides in this body, when he withdraws himself from the physical body.

### VIII

It has been made clear in the last section that in the dream state wherein consciousness is withdrawn from the physical body, the self is in the mind body. The same is exactly the case when the self gives up his physical body altogether. At death he discards the physical sheath. The spirit is the self freed from the physical encasement and dwelling in the *sukshmasharira*.

At or after death the self remains the same as before, just as he is the same in the dream as before and thereafter. The self exists and remains the same. He does not change. He changes only his body as does a man change his clothes. The man or the self continues to exist though in another garb and among other phenomena.

It is thus that the man is immortal. The man, that is, the 'self', does not suffer death. His body alone suffers death, perishes and disintegrates. The self does not die, perish or disintegrate. He is immortal.

## THE PSYCHIC AND THE SPIRITUAL: A HINDU VIEW

BY M. YAMUNACHARYA, M.A.

Psychism usually stands for the acquisition of certain supernormal powers known in India as *siddhis* by means of which certain extraordinary phenomena may be produced to the wonder of the multitude. The psychic powers thus acquired are mistaken by the masses of the people as a sign of spiritual greatness. History of religion is replete with instances of people demanding signs and miracles from any one purporting to be a Messiah of God. Great religious teachers of mankind have been thus forced to perform miracles, though unwillingly, to convince the masses.

A little examination will show that the acquisition and exhibition of psychic powers is not an essential part of spiritual life. It has often happened in India that saints have had to go through the discipline of the *siddhis* only to realize at the end that there is a higher life in the face of which *siddhis* are a futility. A part of Yoga is devoted to the acquisition of psychic powers with the clear understanding that they are only a means to a higher goal. There is often a dangerous temptation to linger on the way, oblivious of the goal. The really great saints do not allow themselves to be

tempted by the psychic powers. As an illustration we may turn to the life of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa as related by Swami Saradananda, an eye witness:

After Ramakrishna had made a mental offering of his body, mind, soul, his all—at the lotus feet of the Divine Mother, he used actually to see himself, in and out, aflame with the fire of knowledge. It was during these times that the Master realized the awakening of the *kundalini* and her wending up towards the cerebral centre. He saw an effulgent divine person coursing up through the *sushumna* canal from the *muladhara* upwards and touching the drooping lotus of each of the six *chakras* (*svadhishtana*, *manipura*, *anahata*, *vishuddha*, *ajna*, and *sahasrara*) with his tongue; the lotus at each centre at once inverted itself up, and blossomed; and anon with each blooming, came to him the realization of various supernatural phenomena. . . . It was then that he had the supernatural perception of the perpetual *pranavadvani* (the sound *Om*) of an infinite volume, as constituted by the combination of all the different individual sounds of the universe. Some of us hold that they have heard the Master himself declare that in those times he could correctly read the meaning of the languages of birds, beasts, and other animals. Towards the end of this period of his *sadhana*, came to the Master the eightfold occult powers, well known as *ashtasiddhis*. . . . (but) he was given the vision to look upon them as the veritable ordure of a whore. 'Henceforth', said the Master, 'the very name of occult power appears nauseating to me.'

The third book of the *Patanjala Yoga-sutra* enumerates many occult powers, and in the fourth book all this is set aside as nothing when compared with the finding of one's own soul—self-realization (*kaivalya*). That the possession of physical and psychic powers as ends in themselves is an obstacle to the progress of the soul has been shown in the same work. And finally we are given to understand that all powers belong to the knowable or the objective universe, which is nothing beside self-realization which is the goal of *Vedanta*. It is recognized by masters on the way that all powers are obtained incidentally after a man attains to the fourth state of consciousness—the *turiya*. A man has to attain to the knowledge, having attained which all other knowledge is attained, having known which there is nothing else to be known. To such a knower of Godhood the powers come of their own accord. The subordinate role of the *siddhis* in the spiritual *sadhana* is adumbrated in the *Vaishnava* scripture, the *Bhagavata* (XI. xv.1), which may be paraphrased thus:

Meditation on God comprises all other meditations, and to him who becomes proficient in this, what is there that cannot be attained?

This man is no other than the Bhakta or the lover of God. What shall not be added unto him? To the Bhaktas no powers of whatever magnitude and description have any value at all; for God is their only value, from which all other values are derived. According to this view, *siddhis* are impediments which entice a man away from the *summum bonum* of life. The *siddhis* are as much liable to abuse as the powers man has now acquired over nature which he is using for the most diabolical purposes of killing his own brethren in the quickest possible time. Similarly psychic powers in the possession of a person whose moral or spiritual nature has not attained a high level, are fraught with untold harm to humanity.

The attainment of *siddhis* enables one to perform the so-called miracles. Between the man striving to acquire miracles on his own account actuated by the threefold vanities of getting fame, power, and honour—a selfish motive—and the man who is far better able to comfort one sinner than perform mango-tricks, rope-climbing, and fire-walking, the difference consists in the former blocking his way to God and the latter in making it clear. The more egoism fattens, the less is the opportunity for the divinity within to express itself. 'I'-ness is the hard shell which holds the soul in prison; it is the bushel hiding the light within. In the long past ages, the demons and *rakshasas* possessed enormous powers (*siddhis*), which they put to wrong use, to self-glorification on their side and harm to others; and this compassed their ruin. The dark powers of evil are said to possess these in abundance. Satan of the Bible possessed great powers: so did the *asuras*, and the *danavas*. But these powers estranged them from God, and hence from emancipation. They were black magicians who worked against the order and concord of the cosmos. So are the warmongers of today, with their diabolical engines of destruction. Science is putting today into the hands of the powers of darkness dangerous knowledge (the *siddhis* of science) which they have not learnt to use. They lack the corresponding refinement of spirit which alone would enable them to utilize the newly found knowledge for the peace and welfare of humanity. The spirit of Mephistopheles is abroad. Shall we be deprived of the only hope of mankind that

righteousness will still prevail and that the divine in man will still be heard? We can only wait and hope. Unless true philosophers and saints manage to exercise their influence and come to the rescue of civilization, the wrong use to which knowledge is being put today would decimate mankind and lay the world waste. The only hope is in true religion which insists on the recognition of spiritual values and their translation into individual and national life. If the world's religions came in conflict with each other and led to disaster in the past and left a trail of bitterness behind, it was not on the ground of eternal truths which true religion holds aloft, but on the ground of racial, social, economic, and political prejudices masquerading as religion. What we need is spirituality, not spiritualism; religion

not religiosity; *sadhana* not *siddhis*. What Aldous Huxley says in this connection is most appropriate here :

At present there is a lamentable tendency to confound the psychic with the spiritual, to regard every supernormal phenomenon, every unusual mental state as coming from God. But there is no reason whatever to suppose that healings, prophecies, and other miracles are necessarily of divine origin. Orthodox Christianity has adopted the absurd position that all supernormal phenomena produced by non-Christians are of diabolic origin, while most of those associated with non-heretical Christians are gifts of God. It would be more reasonable to regard all such 'signs' as due to the conscious or unconscious exploitation of forces within the, to us, strange but still essentially psychic world. . . . As things are, there is a tendency in the West to identify the merely unusual and supernormal with the Divine. The nature of spirituality will never be generally understood until this mental confusion has been dispelled. (*Prabuddha Bharata*, July 1943, p. 333).

## MOULANA RUMI AND NON-DUALISM

By HARENDRA CHANDRA PAUL, M.A.

Jalaluddin Rumi, more commonly known as Moulana Rumi, is probably the greatest philosopher poet of Persia and he has become famous throughout the world by his immortal *Masnavi*. In Persia this book has often been placed next to the Quran. Throughout the book there is fervent spirit, tremendous enthusiasm, sweet melody, high dignity of style, matchless beauty and superior moral teaching. And it is said that that he would be a great poet in future was predicted by Attar, who is no less a great poet of Persia, and he has also become renowned for many writings, the most famous of which is *Muntig-uttair*, an allegorical book which contains the complete survey of the life and doctrine of the Sufis, i.e. the Islamic non-dualists. Moulana Rumi is a poet of the thirteenth century and his *Masnavi* contains the main principles of Sufi doctrine with occasional anecdotes.

In Vedanta, we have the conception of Brahman, as 'ekamevaadvitiyam', one only, without a second; and in Sufism, too, Allah is taken to be not only the only God, but also the only reality and there is nothing else. Everything that we see in the world besides the beauty of God, is only the *maya* which has no essence at all. They say, 'Beneath the veil

of each atom is hidden the heart-ravishing Beauty of the Beloved's face.' When this veil is removed, when all phenomena are annihilated, God and the world become one, and God becomes the sole reality. Rumi says,

*Jumla ma'shuq ast o 'ashiq pardai –  
Zinda ma'shuq ast o 'ashiq mardai.*

'The Beloved is all in all, the lover only veils Him—the Beloved is all that lives, the lover is a dead thing.' All phenomenal existences (man included) are but veils, obscuring the face of the Divine Noumenon, the only real existence, and the moment His sustaining presence is withdrawn, they at once relapse into their original nothingness.

What is this creation of the world? It is all false and impurity. As the individual soul came in contact with impurity, it has become separated from the universal Soul or God. Rumi says, 'Adam took a single step into the region of the enjoyment of the animal spirit; his separation from the high seat of paradise became the punishment of his carnal soul. Although the sin that had issued from him was only as a hair, still that hair had grown upon his two eyes. Adam was the eye of that Eternal Light and a hair in the eye was like a great mountain. If in that state he would

have taken counsel from the angels in paradise, he would not have had to utter apology in penitence. For when intellect becomes enjoined with intellect it prevents evil action. But when a carnal soul is enjoined with another such, it gradually becomes ruined.' Such is the source of the creation of the world. And the Beauty of God is not shown to him who gradually becomes degraded.

Now, what is the remedy? Rumi says, 'Go, seek at once a friend of God. When you have done so, God would become your friend and the road of Light will again be visible.' That is, to make oneself developed in the spiritual path, one must take a spiritual guide, and through his help, he will be enlightened. And as Rumi says, 'Sometimes a sun, and sometimes an ocean thou wilt be, sometimes the mount Qaf<sup>1</sup> and sometimes the Auqa<sup>2</sup> thou wilt be. But in thy own essence thou art neither this nor that, O thou, who art beyond all conjectures and more than more.'

*'Tu neh in bushi neh an, dar dzati khesh—  
Avi Fazun az waham waj besh besh.*

According to Advaitists, the body is a bar to spiritual progress, in the sense that as long as the sense of body is not crushed, the individual soul cannot be re-united with the Universal Soul. Again this body is a stage by holding which one is to realize Brahman. We also find in the *Masnavi*, where Rumi says, 'The treasure is hidden beneath the house (body); therefore, don't be anxious at the demolishing of the house and do not refrain from it.' The all-pervading Beauty of God is under the veil of this house—the house of carnal appetite and cravings of the body. You

<sup>1</sup> Mount Qaf is the mountain where rests the whole universe.

<sup>2</sup> Auqa is the fabulous bird which lives in that mountain. This bird has often been compared to God Himself.

are to purify your individual soul, then you will find that you are the same as He.

But what do we do? Without trying to realize ourselves, we, as Rumi says, 'are engaged in doing patchwork inside the shop (body), but beneath this shop of yours, there are hidden two mines' (referring to the deep knowledge of the essence of one's own life). By patchwork the poet means the eating of bread and drinking of water. He says, 'You are putting these patches over the heavily patched garment of your body; every moment the patched garment of your body is torn, by this eating of yours, you put a patch upon it.' But what is the result at last? Rumi says that we are to repent of all our actions: 'Oh, alas, this shop was my property; I was blind and so did not desire any advantage from this house; Oh, alas, I let go the treasure, and I sprinkled the water of life on dust!'

Again, what is this birth of man? It is the separation of the individual soul from the universal Soul. The moment he is cut off from his original home, he is lamenting for his re-union with the Beloved. And Rumi says in the first few lines of his book, 'Hearken to the reed-flute, how it complains of its banishment from its home, "Ever since they tore me from my osier-bed, my plaintive notes have moved men and women to tears".' The flute refers to the conscience of the individual soul, who is always hankering after the love of God. It laments, 'Body is not veiled from soul, neither soul from body, yet no man has ever seen a soul.' This lamentation of the flute is fire, not mere air, and he who lacks this fire, should be counted as dead. It is the fire of love that inspires the flute. What is this love? It is the strong attraction that draws all creatures back to re-union with their creator.



## THE STATUS OF WOMEN<sup>1</sup>

BY MRS. SWARNAPRABHA SEN

The cause of the education of Indian women no longer requires any champion. It had been an admitted fact even before the present century, and there has been of late a rapid forward march towards the spread of education among girls. There has been correspondingly a rapid increase in the educational institutions for girls, which may be taken as an evidence of the growing interest in their education.

In 1936-37, the total number of recognized institutions in India for the education of girls was 33,989 as against 23,517 in the year 1921-1922, and the total expenditure shows a rise from Rs. 1,31,33,559 to Rs. 2,69,11,982 in India,—a little more than double. But surely we may admit without doubt or debate that in spite of these figures the educationists had been paying meagre attention to this important topic, and girls were long excluded from all schemes of education; the disparity between the education of boys and girls is still strongly marked as there are only 8,138,357 girls under instruction as compared with 11,007,683 boys; the percentage of girls receiving education in Bengal is 2.97 against 9.83 of boys. Home is the woman's sphere of duties, and therefore all the education she needs should be purely domestic—this has been the firm conviction of people everywhere, in the East as well as in the West, till the middle of the 19th century. Women should receive education only to make a happy home, no high academic career, no intellectual life or political life was necessary for that end. Indeed, the abundance of philanthropic works outside the home might even seriously interfere with domestic happiness. Florence Nightingale had to wage a bitter fight against the authority of the family in order to create a scope for nursing work for the woman who had a call, and Florence Nightingale was but one of many such women pioneers who fought for the cause of woman. The glorious history of their achievement in the teeth of bitter

opposition has been told in *The Cause* by Mrs. Rae Strachey, and a perusal of the book will bring home to many impatient idealists the need of caution and the promise of the future which the study of history should always bring.

Things in the West began to change even by the middle of the 18th century when the problem of the education of girls began to be discussed. By the middle of the 19th century we notice distinct movements for the spread of education among girls. The causes were economic as well as environmental or cultural. Economic depression in England had left no option and women had to go out into the world to earn their livelihood—this necessitated systematic courses of study in schools and colleges. The demand called forth the supply. And we find in middle class families girls sharing the burden of household expenses with their fathers and brothers. The period of renaissance of women's education, which led to the introduction and gradual development of a higher standard of academic culture and learning for women, is also the period of the attempts at political emancipation of women and their fight for legal and other rights.

But this revolution or changed outlook in the society, the emancipation of woman through education, has not been an easy process; even in England it has taken the better part of the century for the gradual evolution. The pioneers in the field have had to tackle many a hard problem, cross many hurdles and fight against the strongest opposition but they had the grit and they have, as has been hinted above, won.

Every country has some problems peculiar to it; but the bulk of the problems is common to all countries, as they are of universal interest and belong to the eternal man. Indian womanhood is just out of the 'trammels of an age-long system of narrowness and bondage'. On the threshold of a new era, the Indian woman has her special economic and social problems which beset her path of life and progress.

<sup>1</sup> *The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 9th June, 1940.

In ancient India we find the woman given a high status—she received the same kind of education whenever she showed an aptitude. The girl had her choice in selecting her husband, in an open *svayamvara sabha* where those who were eligible were seated, or she could just make her choice known to her parents. The word *Acharyyani*, now signifying the wife of the preceptor, was originally meant for a lady preceptor. We hear a Gargi and a Ubbhayabharati defeating the greatest scholars of the day in scholastic discussions; we come across in the pages of history the name of Maitreyi scoring a triumph over the great sage Yajnavalkya with her sense of the highest self-realization; even during the British period, we meet with Pandita Ramabai ready with witty and wise retorts and taking the big scholars of her time by surprise. But in between the heights of splendour reached in the Vedic days and our modern experiences, one whole age had rolled by. Manu has no doubt extolled the position of women and enjoined that highest respect should be paid to them; but many causes, which we may dimly see now, causes including political vicissitudes, must have lowered the standard of tribute to be paid to women as women and rendered it hollow and of no meaning at all.

Early marriage debarred girls from any systematic intellectual education worthy of the name; proficiency in the duties of a housewife was considered the only goal for a girl, obedience to the family demands and observance of religious customs her only virtue.

The history of Indian woman reveals an almost pathetic tale of self-sacrifice, an unceasing devotion to the members of the family and an extremely narrow outlook on life, shut out from the outside world. Another cause is the *purdah* system, prevailing more or less in Northern India, which restricted the woman exclusively to the inner circle of the family after the Mohammedan conquest of India. This rendered it impossible for them to receive any education but the barest elements of reading and writing.

The influence of Western education has been nowhere more marked in the change it has brought about in the lives of Indian women. In Bengal, educated men like

Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar raised their voice against child-marriage and advocated the cause of women's education and widow-remarriage, in the teeth of the great opposition from the society which resented all such changes. The *purdah* came to be regarded as a social evil, enlightenment of women was considered a necessity for the good of the society and compulsory primary education for girls was recommended even as early as that. Child marriage, an obstacle in the way of the girls' education, has since been made illegal under the Sarda Act.

By the middle of the last century the Vernacular Literature Society was formed to satisfy the need for reading books in Bengali and its programme included the creation of a Bengali Family Library, by the publication of such books as might be safely put into the hands of our pure-minded women.

Towards the end of the last century, an association known as the *Antahpura Strisiksha Samiti* was started by a band of enthusiasts who prescribed a select course of studies for girls and young married women in Barisal, Faridpur and Dacca. Texts were circulated in print and arrangements were made for an examination to test their progress. Workers were mainly young men, some in the teaching line, others outside it. For some years it made remarkable progress, but it has dwindled away since, probably being eclipsed by the urge for polities so strongly felt in Bengal since 1905.

But long before that, the Despatch of 1854 recommended that female education was to receive the warm and cordial support of the Government. The Education Commission of 1882 made a special recommendation for the spread of education among the girls. Girls' schools and colleges were to have women on their Committees and in it was recommended further that there should be special posts for women in the inspection line to supervise the education of girls in Government and Government-aided schools. The Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, constituted on purely democratic lines, advocated the same status for men and women. 'Equal rights for men and women' was their code and the authority of the prevailing *shastras* and tradition could not be felt

by them to be binding. Keshub Chunder Sen, A. M. Bose, Durga Mohan Das and others took up the cause of women's education as a part of their new religion and the change was tremendous. Brahmo women were taken out of the *purdah*, they were given a liberal education, taken to meetings and prayer halls, and above all they were looked upon as true companions and helpmates, not as creatures doomed to life within the gates.

Behind the *purdah* the condition of the women was regrettable in more than one respect. Their physical health was sadly neglected, aesthetic culture was dwindling and women's dress was neither convenient nor sufficient. They subjected themselves to the strictest self-denial in everything. The Brahmo Samaj took up the woman's cause and heralded a new dawn of glory for them. The graceful way of putting on the *saree* of the modern Bengali girl, in itself a revolution in dress, can be traced to the educated women of the Brahmo Samaj in general, and in particular to the example set by Mrs. S. N. Tagore.

Pandit Sivanath Sastri, a leader of the Brahmo Samaj, in many of his social novels lays stress on the need of educated mothers who will create an enlightened family atmosphere, and bring up the future generation of Bengal, stronger in physical and moral principles and better fitted for a sound, healthy life of higher activities. The taste for learning spread by the Brahmo Samaj and other pioneers of women's education has increased with time and has changed the Hindu society's traditional life and outlook.

The eleventh quinquennial report on the education of girls in Bengal during the period 1932-37 says that the necessity of educating the girls has now been fully realized both among the Hindus and Muslims. But the contribution of funds towards the education of girls from public sources has not been keeping pace with the growth in the expenditure on women's education.

Priority should now be given to the claims of girls' education in every scheme of expansion.

The number of girls' schools and colleges in Bengal today, is not insignificant and Bengal's record is good except in the

matter of primary education in which some other provinces are far ahead of us. For example, states like Travancore, Cochin, Mysore and Baroda have a higher percentage of literate women than Bengal. Of course, the figure for the whole of India is only a little over 3 per cent, a matter which needs Government's serious attention. But women B.A.'s and M.A.'s are not rare in these days. Though Bengal cannot boast of women ministers in the province she has her councillors in the Legislative Assembly and the Calcutta Corporation. The 3 foremost Government colleges in Bengal have women Principals, and the posts of the Inspectress of schools in both the Divisions in Bengal as well as in Assam are held by Bengali ladies today. The general rule is now women staff for girls' schools and colleges, and the percentage of passes and repeated brilliant results of the girls amply prove the efficiency of the women teachers.

The following excerpts from contemporary papers will furnish sufficient testimony regarding the academic success achieved by women in university examinations and its significance.

'Of the 25,000 students taking the Matriculation Examination of the University this year, the report is that the candidate to secure topmost position, is a girl from Sylhet. Srimati Kanak Purkayastha has thereby set up a record, for in the history of this University's Matriculation Examinations this proud distinction has never before come to her sex. There have been girls outdoing boys in the B.A. and M. A. Examinations, but so far, the boys could still hold their own in the Matriculation and Intermediate Examinations, but now they have to make room for the other sex in the Matriculation. With a hundred obstacles to get over, the girls have been putting up very brilliant records in the University and the nonsense that may still be heard whispered about the supposed intellectual inferiority of the womankind need no longer disturb the equanimity of the more sensitive among the other sex.'

'The University of Calcutta's Matriculation Examination this year has been remarkable in more than one way. Candidates worked under a new set of regulations, involving more subjects of study and the use of the mother tongue in several papers.

To many of them it was a piquantly new experience. Most interesting has been the manner in which girls have acquitted themselves. One heads the list, three others are near the top. It may be girls have reacted more dexterously to the new circumstances than boys or that there is more individual attention to pupils in girls' schools than in boys'.<sup>22</sup>

Things are not what they were twenty years ago, when a woman with academic degrees was regarded as a blue-stocking and the work of a school-mistress was looked down upon as something very low and a matter of drudgery. The appearance of woman in the open with a ladies' handbag in her hand would invariably call forth sarcastic remarks from the orthodox society two decades ago. But economic depression after the last great war has forced social changes in the general body politic; the marriageable age of girls has gone up; in many cases it is difficult to secure bridegrooms suitable financially and in other respects and in many cases even the married girls have been forced by circumstances to earn a living of their own. Economic necessity has changed the angle of vision and the bread-winning girl is no longer an object of stigma in the middle class families. She is rapidly becoming quite an ordinary phenomenon. Education may have lost much of its cultural value but it has gained in its economic value. Vocations other than teaching have also been taken up by girls—and a general sense of equality in status has been born, though women are even now barred from all competitive examinations, and medicine and law are the only vocations where men are prepared to admit them. The people have become hospital-minded during the past decade or so and hundreds of women are eager to avail of medical help for themselves and their children. Consequently, the rate of infant mortality has come down to a certain extent but there is infinitely more scope for improvement and expansion.

The teaching in the girls' schools, just as in the boys', has to a great extent suffered from the unfortunate fact that teaching often is regarded as a profession to take up, only if one cannot take up anything else. There

are surely many in the profession who justify the opinion. And indeed teaching is a career which at least like any other profession calls for special gifts which are lacking in most of the teachers. As a result of the last fifty years of hard work in the field, we now find a marked improvement both in the quality of teaching as well as in the estimation of society, though the results are still not up to the standard.

Of course, it is a truism that teachers are born and not made. Yet in recent years, there have been organized efforts at training men and women for the profession of teaching. Training colleges for men and women have sprung up and the number of training schools for women shows the demand for trained women teachers all over Bengal. In Calcutta there are training schools both Government, Government-aided and privately maintained or helped by the Corporation. 'Serious efforts are however required to persuade girls of good education to take up teaching, to provide facilities for their training and to ensure that when they start teaching they will be able to work under reasonably safe and comfortable conditions whether they are employed in towns or villages.' In Bengal the number of training schools was only 11, the enrolment 271, as against 67 schools and 3,453 pupils in Madras. That shows the serious defect of Bengal on this point.

The Vernacular Training School for Girls at Dacca is perhaps one of the oldest of its kind and it has served many poor widows of the orthodox village families by enabling them to make their own living. The standard of teaching may not have been very high and the quality of instruction imparted by these trained teachers has certainly not been of a high class but the school has effected a great change in the village homes behind the *purdah*. Bengal has no separate training college for women. On the contrary the David Hare Training College does not admit women, though the Scottish Church College opened a special class for women in 1934, the year which saw the close of the Diocesan College.

The Loreto House has B. T. and L. T. classes receiving Government aid, but seats are limited owing to want of accommodation. In the Calcutta University Teachers' Training Department opened in 1935 and in the

<sup>22</sup> *The Statesman*, 12th June, 1940.

B. T. classes to be opened next July, however, there is no bar to women students.

The number of candidates seeking admission into the training classes has recently gone up so high that most of the schools have discontinued their junior course and restricted the admission to the senior course exclusively, thus barring out a large number for the lower grade. The Corporation of Calcutta has set up its own training college and is making efforts to equip its teachers, men and women, properly and efficiently for the work they have to do.

The Saroj Nalini Association and the Nari Siksha Samity of Lady Abala Bose also deserve mention in this connection. These two institutions are unique in the sense that they are mainly industrial schools—trying to enable girls, specially widows, to earn a livelihood through arts and crafts at the same time that they provide for elementary education. The progress made in the few years is marvellous and it speaks of the imagination of their founders and untiring efforts of the workers. Girls are given useful and practical lessons but for their industrial products it has not been easy to find a market. Outside Calcutta too, there are a few institutions which are silently working for the cause of the uplift of women. The Ananda Ashram at Dacca is an example.

The demand for the higher education of women continues to be on the increase. But the number of colleges for women is very small compared with that of colleges for men. In Calcutta the only Government college for women has been the Bethune College until recently, when the Lady Brabourne College was started specially for Muslim girls. The Victoria Institution and the Loreto House have college departments. Some colleges like the Vidyasagar and Asutosh are working in double shifts—girls in the morning and boys in the day time.<sup>1</sup>

The hospitals and jails have women visitors and there are several committees and organizations exclusively run by women. The Women's Education Committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education has been appointed to examine the existing organizations for the education of girls. The education which has spread so far among the women of the country has infused into their

minds the value of organizational work. It was with such an idea, an idea of working for the good of women in social and educational spheres, that an all-India women's social organization, the A. I. W. C., as it is popularly called, came into existence.

The facts mentioned above will serve to show how the scope of woyan has widened in society; how, taught as she has been on Western lines, she has learned to take care not only of her own self, but also her old parents and infirm husband. The helplessness of women, and more particularly of widows, as economic units, has gone away; they have ceased to be liabilities and have grown to be assets. And it cannot be denied that the marvellous transformation has been mostly, if not wholly, due to the new education of the West.

The spirit of the times aided by the selfless devotion of the reformers has played its part and we find instances of forward movements towards progress and advance. 'Both within their homes and outside they are capable of doing other work and an ever-increasing number of women is engaging in such work—some remunerative and some honorary—done as part of altruistic, social and civic service. But motherhood and all that it implies must continue to be women's function if society is to exist.'<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting to observe that the education of girls has brought about a remarkable change in the mental outlook of the educated section in Bengal. Young husbands felt that for the happiness of their married lives they could not be indifferent to this section and they wanted to bridge the gulf of interests that existed so long between the educated husband and the illiterate wife. They learnt to prefer an intellectual companionship with the wife. This meant that the girls should have a wider and deeper education, that the marriageable age should be extended and mothers should have modern ideas about the care of children. Thus fixing up the marriageable age has been influenced by the need of giving proper education to girls. The duties of an educated woman on her marriage, the attitude which she was to have adopted towards her possibly ignorant mother-in-law had been detailed in a book *Sushilar Upakhyan* which enjoyed wide popularity in the

<sup>1</sup> This system does not now exist in the Vidyasagar College.—Ed. P. B.

<sup>2</sup> *Modern Review*, June, 1940.

sixties of the last century. The status of women has gained not only in extent but also in content.

The first glamour of awakening has passed and we are confronted with doubts and difficulties so natural to the period of transition. Has the modern system of education helped the girls of Bengal to be true women? Have they changed the moral outlook of the present generation, added depth and width to it and raised the general tone? Does this education help women in fostering a spirit of true nationalism? Is she failing to live upto the ideal of womanhood? Is the educated girl growing selfish individual tendencies and thus helping to break up the joint-family system? Some maintain that the number of women out for earning a living has complicated the problem of unemployment for the Bengali youth. Does the education of girls then make Bengal's economic problems more perplexing than they might otherwise have been? These are questions that need to be faced today.

If the present results are in any way found to be reassuring and not alarming, then the effects of women's education in Bengal during the last 50 or 60 years would justify themselves. Bengali women have shown distinctive power in various spheres of daily life and duties. Life which is merely mechanical loses its beauty. To force an individual into a frame-work of a lifeless system brings with it death in the end, not life. Given the wide portals of knowledge and learning Indian womanhood is sure to enter the charming land of self-reverence and true freedom which is the essence of life. Mother India is waiting eagerly for the garland of pretty flowers woven by her truly educated daughters who will assimilate the wisdom of the past and freshen themselves with currents more modern and more suited to the age.

The results of Western education should hearten the critic and the student who watches the onward progress of Bengali society through the sands of time.

## MEN OR MACHINES?

BY NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER

The wide-spread discussion of the educational process which is now going on throughout the nation gives evidence of much misunderstanding and confused thinking. The truly educational process in any form is and must be one and the same in respect to its ideals and the guidance which it offers toward achieving them. It may, of course, be multi-form in respect of its methods and its content.

Liberal education takes precedence over every other form of instruction. It must always be dominant. Vocational training or instruction, which is something quite distinct from education, should always follow the ideals and methods of liberal education and be subordinate to them. If, on the other hand, liberal education be even crippled, much less abandoned, then no matter how successful vocational training may be, its products will not be men but machines.

The factors in carrying on a liberal education are the home, the school, and the church. It is because the home is so often overlooked

and neglected as a fundamental educational influence and because excessive responsibility is put upon the school without the aid and co-operation of the family that there are so great and so many shortcomings in the education of today. What is now popularly described and discussed by the grandiloquent term juvenile delinquency is, in fact, chiefly the result of the lack of home training. Good manners and sound morsels on the part of the young must have their foundation and their beginnings in the discipline offered by the home. It is only under such conditions that the school may, when the time comes, take on and successfully establish its share of responsibility for the strengthening and continuance of this necessary discipline and training.

No more reactionary influence has come into education than that which is oddly described as progressive education. This plan of action

<sup>1</sup> An Address at the opening of the 191st Academic Year of Columbia University, September 27, 1944.

or rather non-action would, in its extreme form, first of all deprive the child of his intellectual, social, and spiritual inheritance and put him back in the Garden of Eden to begin all over again the life of civilized man. He must be asked to do nothing which he does not like to do. He must be taught nothing which he does not choose to learn. He must not be subject to discipline in good manners and sound morals. In other words, he must be let alone to do what he likes in this amazing twentieth-century world in order that what has been called his individuality may grow naturally and without guidance or discipline. It is just such fantastic doctrines as these which explain so much of that which goes on day by day and which both shocks and alarms truly civilized human beings.

We are unfortunately brought face to face almost daily with convincing evidence that skilful training in some specific vocation is often assumed to be an acceptable substitute for liberal education. Nothing could be farther from the fact. In the Middle Ages the constructive thought of Europe chose the Trivium—grammar, logic, and rhetoric—and the Quadrivium—arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy—to be the instruments with which to lay the foundations of liberal education as it was then understood. Centuries later these subjects were superseded by the study of languages and literatures, of history and of philosophy. Afterwards the fundamental principles of natural science were added as well as the history and basic thought of the world's economic organization and life. It is not only, however, the subject-matter of instruction which constitutes liberal education, it is still more the spirit in which this subject-matter is presented and the lessons which are drawn from that interpretation. Of outstanding excellence in presenting the foundation of a liberal education are the three courses offered for years past by the Faculty of Columbia College—Contemporary Civilization, Humanities, and Science, the like of which should be offered in substance, at least, to every college student in the land.

The rise of democracy has greatly increased the problems of liberal education as well as the difficulty of making sure that its point of view and underlying principles are at least the basis and guidance of vocational training.

No matter how skilful in his calling a vocationally trained human being may be, he will remain merely a machine unless there is added to his skill some conception of what civilization means, and of the part played in the world's intellectual life by the liberal arts and sciences as well as by the subject-matter of his own occupation.

It is customary to focus all educational discussion upon the problems presented by the school, the college, and the university, but this is not enough. Full account must also be taken of the influence of the circumstances under which life is carried on, of the conditions of gaining a livelihood and of the opportunities which are offered by personal growth and development in the social and economic order of our time. It remains perfectly true, as has often been said, that the liberally educated human being will look backward for understanding and guidance and not merely for purposes of imitation. The power of science is producing day by day amazingly perfect machines which appear almost able to take the place of human intelligence. Of this the recently completed 'automatic sequence-controlled calculator' is an outstanding example. It is of vital importance to remember that machines, however excellent, are only machines, and that the human being who copies them or endeavours to imitate them in any guise is preparing for a machine-made life. The man who is not a machine will read and reflect. He will reason and ask questions. He will turn to the world's wisdom in order to get help for the elevation of the plane on which his own life is to be passed. If a practical plan can be worked out by which all training shall rest on liberal education even though limited, as a foundation, then we shall be opening the door toward progress in the world such as we have never yet been able to achieve. We must not turn from the education of men to the making of machines. Assurance must be given that our educational system will do all that is possible to make liberal education in some form, however limited in time, the foundation as well as the ideal of all training of any kind. This will reduce to a minimum the number of skilled human machines who have never risen to be really men. Our constant aim must be men and not machines.

## PLEASURE AND PAIN

BY HARNATH SAHAYA, M.A.

While looking into the nature of pleasure and pain, it is, first of all, necessary to understand the nature of the Self (*atma*) which is the knower or the perceiver of pleasure and pain, and that of the Mind (*manas*) or the mental states consisting of the feelings of pleasure and pain.

The Self does not consist of pleasure or pain. It is the pure consciousness, the mere spectator of the mental states (pleasurable or otherwise) which are in a state of continual flux. It is the perceiver of all changes (physical or mental) working in this world, and as such, it cannot itself belong to the category of the changeful objects it sees or perceives; for, as soon as we admit the Self to be a link in the ever-changing series of the mundane phenomena, it ceases to be the perceiver and takes the place of the perceived. Moreover, the very act of the perception of change necessarily implies that the perceiver distinguishes itself as the unchanging seer in relation to which the changingness of the changeful is grasped and realized. So the Self or the seer cannot but be real and unchanging; and its very attribute of unchangingness or unchangeability further indicates its ever-blissful nature and its being *above* the feelings of pleasures and miseries of which the world is so full; for pleasure and pain imply a change of conditions and without this change neither of them can ever be felt in itself.

The mind—which is an instrument of the Self for cognizing the world and which receives all its powers from the Self—consists of ever-changing states characterized by three distinct fundamental modes or faculties, viz. thinking or cognition, feeling or emotion, and willing or volition. Though these faculties are, to some extent, interdependent, yet there exists a relation of antagonism or opposition among them. The heightening of the one indicates the lowering of the rest. For example, when a man is under the influence of the emotion of grief, as when he hears of the death of his intimate friend, he, for the time being, becomes unable to perform any intellectual or practical work. Great thinkers too are not

infrequently found to be comparatively wanting in feeling and practicality.

Whenever there are discordant vibrations of nerves in our physical sheaths, there is a feeling of pain, and whenever the nerve vibrations are harmonious, there is a feeling of pleasure. Besides this, as all knowledge, in its course of development, induces feeling, the knowledge of the unity of Self transforms itself into a feeling of sympathy for all individual selves of the world; and hence the woes and miseries of the world too introduce some sort of agitation in our inner nature and we feel pain or sorrow.

Now, pleasure and pain belong to the mental faculty of feeling or emotion. In the state of pure cognition the Self retains its true nature of ever-blissfulness, but in the state of feeling, the Self (the knower), comparatively speaking, forgets itself, for the time being, being absorbed in and identified with the object of its knowledge. It becomes passive; it begins to be carried away by emotions; it loses its hold upon itself; and it becomes subject to all sorts of miseries that arise from a dependent and conditioned existence. The strengthening of the conditions of feeling means the weakening of the conditions of cognition and it consequently implies the forgetfulness of the true nature of the Self.

Pleasure or pain is necessarily inherent in a state in which the life depends upon a change of conditions. If a man wants to have pleasure, he cannot have it except in a change of condition, for without change or without the perception or sensation of change the feeling of pleasure is impossible. Pleasure means, in its ultimate analysis, the passing of our consciousness from a worse condition into a better. In order to have a feeling of this passing, there must always be the perception, in the background, of a condition which can be said to be worse, more painful or undesirable. If we eliminate this background, we have to eliminate also the feeling of pleasure; for, there being no worse, there can be no passing from it to better and so there can be no feeling of pleasure. Thus we see that we

cannot experience pleasure without pain, antecedent or consequent. The amount of pleasure also is rather proportional to that of pain which precedes it.

Hence the truth is that the world is neither full of pleasure nor of pain; but it or its phenomenal side is in a state of continual flux or change, and in this condition of change if we identify ourselves with the change that it undergoes, and feel the change as our own, we shall necessarily have to feel both the pleasure and the pain—for none can be felt in itself *per se* without the consciousness or the feeling of the other in the background.

Such being the nature of pleasure and pain, the only way to avoid pain must be to avoid pleasure as well, and the way to avoid both will be to keep ourselves *above* all feelings of change, being immovably fixed in ourselves as the seer of all changes and as subject to none. Though it requires the strongest efforts, on our part, to keep ourselves in ourselves, yet the practice of constant contemplation on the nature of the Self can enable us to prevent ourselves from being passively drifted away along the current of changes that

not *we* but our *thought* energies are undergoing. The laws of psychology must hold good. The greater the contemplation or cognition, the lesser is the feeling or emotion; and the decadence of feeling necessarily means the mitigation of pleasure and pain. We should, therefore, think ourselves as the seers of all changes and not as subject to any change at all, just as we keep to the idea of our personal identity unchanged amidst our bodily changes in childhood, youth and old age.

This realization of the Self as a spectator can alone entitle us to attain the state of purity or pure bliss which is free from all *dvandva* or pairs of opposites, viz. pleasure and pain, sympathy and antipathy, etc. Herein lies the necessity of our constant remembrance of, or contemplation upon, God, the Self of ourselves, or the utility of *japa*, i.e. the repetition of *Om* or other names of the Lord accompanied with meditation upon their meanings enjoined by Hindu religion for the realization of the Self, for the release of ourselves from the miseries of the world and consequently for the attainment of peace and bliss.

## RIGHT ACTION, THE THEME OF THE GITA

By S. P. TAYAL, M.A., B.Sc.

'What action is, what non-action is, is a subject which deludes even the wise. Therefore, shall I explain action by knowing which thou shalt be freed from evil.' This is the pivot round which the teaching of the Gita revolves. This is the biggest question which every thinking man must answer at every step of his journey through life and on which depends his future progress, his very spiritual life, and his reputation. One wrong step and he may find himself rolling down a precipice, all his chances of ascent and glory lost for ever. One's intellect plays an important part in this discrimination of the right path, but the intellect has got to be purified in order to make it a right sort of guide. The Gita describes at length what is *satvic* (right kind) intellect, *satvic* faith, *satvic* knowledge, *satvic* charity, *satvic* sacrifice, *satvic* austerity, *satvic* food, *satvic* action, *satvic* fortitude, *satvic* happiness. Here is a whole code

of action to guide man, but he must decide for himself what the right thing to do is in a particular predicament. This is a very difficult decision to make, but made it must be, and the Gita gives in two lines the principle which must guide one in making a choice.

सत्र सत्त्वं निमंसत्वात्पकाशकमनामयम् ।  
सुखसङ्गेन बद्धाति शानसङ्गेन चानध ॥

'There, *satva*, being light-giving and free from evil, because of its purity, binds, O sinless being, by attachment to happiness and knowledge.' Whatever makes for happiness and knowledge is right action, but happiness itself is to be discriminated and that happiness alone is to be sought which is bitter at the start (not necessarily always) and sweet like nectar in the end, and which satisfies the intellect and one's inner self. Similarly that knowledge is to be sought which enables one

to see the one Reality in all beings, 'the undivided among all things divided'. This is the criterion set for all action, and a man does not come to grief if he makes this the pole-star of his life journey. He will not judge his present duty by the immediate results its performance will bring him, he will look ahead and find out what its ultimate effect will be like, how it will affect his mentality, his moral nature and his whole outlook of life, even his reputation.

The last is not the least consideration, for when Arjuna is smitten with doubt as to the correctness of his duty of fighting those whom he revered and worshipped, his guide and philosopher, Krishna, expatiates before him on why fighting was his only duty. He tells him that the soul was immortal and no body could kill it. If he did not fight he would be guilty of dereliction of his kingly obligation which must be fulfilled whocver the person or persons affected by the even-handed justice he had to deal; he should not take the injustice done to the Pandavas lying down, and must seek redress, even by killing, when all persuasion and appeal for justice had failed. He would incur sin if he did not fight, as fighting for a right cause was obligatory on a *Kshatriya*. And lastly, Sri Krishna urges on Arjuna that he must guard his reputation, the loss of which is worse than death to a man who has a good name to lose.

Krishna progressively rouses Arjuna's sense of duty, by philosophizing on the nature of the soul, by tickling his pride as an Aryan and a *Kshatriya* and lastly by putting him on guard against the cavilling and reviling which his friends, who held him in high estimation, and his enemies, who regarded him as an honourable foe, would indulge in. Cowards who run away from their field of duty cannot have any claim to the best things of this world; things of the world to come are out of the question. Thus, having judged an act by its ultimate result, acts of omission and commission both included, without regard to its unpleasantness or apparent repugnance to moral standards, one must act boldly, sometimes in the face of opposition of the whole society, or one's dearest friend and relative when one's inner conviction is irresistible. This conviction is nothing else than the urge of the right intellect, which must guide one as to 'in what action one should engage one-

self, what action one should renounce, what action and inaction are, what one should fear and not fear, what action will bring one freedom, what will throw one into bondage'. Here the reader will surely find himself against a hurdle, because when one acts throwing all regard for public approval or approbation to the winds one injures one's reputation, which is set in another place as a criterion for correct action, for reputation is nothing if not approval of your actions by the society. But these conundrums are the problems of individuals and societies through which their evolution finds a passage; they are the Scylla and Charybdis of all reformers who could not do anything big and great, if they had set public acclamation as their test of correct conduct.

Self-respect is another deceitful name for pride and arrogance, which should be shunned like poison, for there is no self-respect without self-assertion which is a negation of self-immolation, a virtue always extolled to the skies. But self-immolation has its limitations, for you have no right to reduce yourself to dust to be trampled upon by all passers-by; you as a human being must demand your privileges, and none should be so high as to arrogate to himself the right of disposal of these privileges. You have your rightful place in society; to maintain that position is the call of self-respect, and to act in a manner worthy of that position is your duty, as to refrain from doing anything which may bring discredit to that station should be your foremost care. To show yourself as belonging to a higher station is showing yourself up and is an act of arrogance. Giving an old man your seat in a railway compartment is an act of self-immolation, to maintain your seat when ordered by a bully to vacate it for him is the demand of self-respect.

Thus it is clear that the same act may proceed from different motives, and its moral worth may be similarly different under differing circumstances. Honour and disgrace are of equal value to him who has realized his own self in all beings; he may laugh at a disgrace gratuitously inflicted, but if you will have the hardihood to emulate his example you will degrade yourself, for you must be a man before you can be a god.

The Gita will show us the way out of all intriguing situations in which we may find ourselves involved, if we will just refer to it in a prayerful mood, for not often we read meanings in a text which suit us best, because we exercise our intelligence rather too much and mould ourselves in the right mood rather

too little. This life is a field of action ; action alone counts; tons of wordy sympathy and noble thoughts do not equal an ounce of mercy, which soothes the afflicted and ennobles the doer. Right act at the right moment is the one thing needful, and the Gita sets the standard of rightness for all.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MISSION IN AMERICA

In the *Vedanta and the West* for Jan'y.-Feby. 1945 is reproduced part of an introduction, by Christopher Isherwood, to a book to be published shortly. This modern English poet who is taking a keen interest in the study and practice of Vedanta, summarizes the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda in the course of his excellent introduction. Recalling the visit to America of Swami Vivekananda and his memorable speech at the Parliament of Religions, he writes :

... The other delegates to the Parliament were prominent men, admirably representative of their respective creeds. Vivekananda, like his Master, was unknown. For this very reason, his magnificent presence created much speculation among the audience. When he rose to speak, his first words, 'Sisters and Brothers of America,' released one of those mysterious discharges of enthusiasm which seem to be due to an exactly right conjunction of subject, speaker and occasion.

The course of the Swami's pioneering work was none too smooth. He had to face and overcome many difficulties.

In those days, a foreign lecturer touring America found himself in a position midway between that of a campaigning politician and a circus performer. He had to face the rough-and-tumble of indiscreet publicity, well-meant but merciless curiosity, reckless slander, crude hospitality, endless noise and hurry and fuss. Vivekananda was surprisingly well equipped for all these trials.

The Swami was outspoken and independent in his views, and said what he had to say whether his hearers liked it or not. His emphasis on religious harmony and mutual tolerance and acceptance was, of course, not relished by those who 'still clung to a rigid Christian fundamentalism'. His words were terse and to the point :

Look at the ocean and not at the wave; see no difference between ant and angel. Every worm is the brother of the Nazarene. . . . Obey the

scriptures until you are strong enough to do without them. . . . Every man in Christian countries has a huge cathedral on his head, and on top of that a book. . . . The range of idols is from wood and stone to Jesus and Buddha.

But Swami Vivekananda had won the hearts of progressive Americans through the magic touch of his love and personality. As Poet Isherwood puts it,

Vivekananda really loved America : that was part of his greatness. As few men, before or since, he stood between East and West impartially, admiring the virtues and condemning the defects of both. To Americans and Englishmen he preached India's religious tolerance, her freedom of spiritual investigation, her ideal of total dedication to the search for God.

### MESSAGE OF THE GITA

That the Bhagavad Gita was one of the greatest books that contained a most sublime spiritual philosophy of enduring value to all mankind was the view expressed by Aldous Huxley. Speaking on the greatness and universality of the 'message of the Gita', Sir S. Radhakrishnan exhorted the Gita Samiti, Madras, to spread that message in a way helpful to the needs of man today in India and abroad. Sir Radhakrishnan said :

The fundamental teaching of the Gita was that behind and above the objective manifestations of the human soul there was a divine Reality and that by constant endeavour the human soul could have communion with the Divine. The Gita taught them that the progressive manifestation, from the lowest sub-conscious matter to the highly developed spiritual being, could not be regarded as the accidental expressions of caprice, but as the unfolding of a superior Reality standing behind, above and covering them all. . . . The Gita also taught them that man was enclosed in a number of sheaths, and if he was able to break through sheaths, He would stand revealed. If man was to attain perfection he must do it by constant endeavour to unravel those sheaths, and must surrender himself to the divine will. . . . The greatest need of the day was that every human soul must endeavour to transform itself into an instrument of the universal purpose. If that was their goal, God

Himself would surely lead them to that consummation, and the best guide for them to teach the pathway was the Bhagavad Gita which explained the three main *margas*, the *jnana*, the *bhakti*, and the *karma margas*. (Hindu).

The idea of complete surrender to divine will which is found in most religions is often misunderstood by many who take it to be a sort of fatalism. 'The Gita has ever upheld the importance of individual initiative in religious life. If every effect must have a cause, and if our future is shaped by our present actions, good and bad, it follows that our past deeds are responsible for much of the existing misery or happiness.

It is sometimes said that Sri Krishna has justified war by encouraging Arjuna to fight. Nothing can be farther from truth. 'The Lord did not command Arjuna to fight, but exhorted him to do his *karma*.' So long as there is violence in a man he cannot help being violent. Sri Krishna asks Arjuna not to take shelter under the cloak of the virtue of non-resistance being unable to fight against those whom he considers his enemies. Non-resistance of the strong and the brave is undoubtedly the highest ideal. But, in the words of the Gita, if such non-resistance proceeds from cowardice or weakness, it is better to resist than to yield to unmanliness. The case of the man of realization would be different indeed. To one who has developed that supreme love and non-attachment, there would be no more suffering and it would be impossible for him to inflict suffering on others.

#### AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

Writing in the *Science and Culture* for May 1945, on the wealth of mineral deposits in India and their utility in enhancing soil fertility with a view to helping the Indian farmer, Mr. P. E. Mehta observes :

Agriculture has always been the primary industry of India even from early days. The proportion of population dependent on agriculture has risen from 65% in 1872 to 75% in 1940.

Nine-tenths of the population of the country still continue to live under rural conditions, and even the factory labour of the towns as well as the commercial classes continue to retain the connection with the villages from time to time from which they have migrated.

The agricultural production of India was directed during the last hundred years towards the securing of an exportable surplus of raw products, to meet India's obligations resulting from her connection with outside countries, and not to meet her own requirements. (Italics ours).

Mr. Mehta makes mention of certain revealing facts and figures which show the neglect of cultivation and low productivity in India as compared with other countries. More than half the acreage is not cultivated, and nearly 30% remains fallow. The yield in lbs. per acre of rice for 1938 was 884 in India, while it was 4,928 in Italy and 8,136 in Egypt. The figures for wheat are no more encouraging. He emphasizes the need for the establishment of fertilizer industries all over the country, and makes some useful suggestions regarding the betterment of agricultural economy.

The large scale on which we are raising oil-seeds of all kinds suggests vast possibilities of using them in the building up of new industries like paints and varnishes, oils and other lubricating products. India which is at present the importer of the above commodities should be made an exporter, and the profits thus accruing from agriculture will go to enrich the people of the country. In the same way the other commodities should not be allowed to be exported in the raw state, but efforts should be made to export them in a manufactured or semi-manufactured state.

In the writer's opinion it is not in the best interests of India to export agricultural products in return for manufactured goods and machinery. With expansion of land resources and increased production of crops, any possible food shortage in the country can be eliminated, thus ensuring non-recurrence of famines.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF CASTE SYSTEM

Sri Shankaracharya Swami of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham made some very pertinent observations on the origin and utility of the Hindu caste system. He said :

Castes cannot be classified as high or low for individual or communal pride and vanity. They are effective natural groups of individuals for the purpose of division of social and spiritual functions for the common good of the community with particular characteristics and modes of living in respect of the different functions of each hereditary *varna*. The spiritual realization of a butcher by the discharge of his duties as prescribed by *shastras* is in no way different from the realization of a pious brahmin in the discharge of his duties as in the case of Dharma Vyadha. Though the *Vedas* contemplate four main *varnas*, owing to human weakness and consequent admixture of *varnas*, different *yatis* many of which are also mentioned in the *Vedas*, have resulted and such progenies, instead of being ousted from the Hindu fold, have been allotted special avocations and spiritual guidance. . . . These sub-divisions which originated for stabilizing and preserving the community have now become a source of weakness to the mother community : because, responsible members of these sub-castes have become more selfish and devote no attention either to the moral and ethical purity of its members or to co-operate with the other similar sub-castes of the community. Experience in agriculture will show that a vast

area with ridges on the four extremities cannot retain sufficient water for the growth of crops on the entire area so successfully as when divided into plots with ridges to protect each plot; for, it is possible that any leakage in the long ridge of the vast single area can drain off the water unnoticed. It is the prime duty of the present-day Hindu to know the general *dharma*s which the Vedas enjoin on all mankind as also the specific *dharma* of his caste, to weed out the irregularities that have crept into the castes and to stabilize it with the main idea of strengthening the mother community. This system alone will guarantee against the evils of encroachment, exploitation, and communalism.

This will lead to the realization of universal happiness and peace. (*Hindu*).

Every Hindu, orthodox or otherwise, will, no doubt, immensely appreciate this liberal and helpful interpretation of caste by one who occupies a high place of honour and can speak authoritatively on the subject. It is clear the original promoters of caste had nothing but the welfare of society in view, though later on its true significance was lost upon a large section of its adherents.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**THREE MYSTIC POETS.** By ABINASH CHANDRA BOSE. Published by School and College Bookstall, Kolhapur. Pp. 156. Price Rs. 5.

Professor A. C. Bose of the Kolhapur College has really distinguished himself in the field of English literary criticism by the production of this work. Within the small compass of 156 pages he has given us a penetrating and instructive analysis of the element of mysticism in the poetry of W. B. Yeats, A. E., and our own Rabindranath Tagore. He traces clearly, quoting authorities, the effect of Indian literature and philosophy upon the two Irish poets. As for Rabindranath Tagore, he was saturated in the mysticism of the *Upanishads* and their sublime philosophy of the divinity of man. About mysticism, Professor Bose says:

Mysticism may be considered in two distinct stages. Firstly and negatively, it is a sense of darkness impenetrable to the light of the intellect, of a profound mystery of something enigmatic and inscrutable—surrounding our life. Though negative in its relation to the intellect, it has a more or less positive significance too; for the sense of the mysterious implies the existence of something outside the domain of sense and reason, however vaguely that existence may be felt. The experience of the darkness of the mysterious is different in kind from the blindness of ignorance.

Secondly and positively, mysticism is the experience of a light illuminating the secret depths of being; a revelation, within the spirit of man, of a higher order of reality than the phenomenal and higher value of life than the animal. In other words, mysticism is the intuitive experience of a spiritual reality and the discovery of a spiritual value.

The author traces the mystical element in the poetry of the three great poets he has been considering. He shows how the bulk of Yeats' poetry is mystical more on account of the temper of his mind, the tone of his feelings and the nuance of his style than for the revelation of a mystic apprehension or declaration of a mystic faith. He is mystic in that he recognizes the mystery of life and does not attempt to explain it, much less to explain it away.

A. E. is seen as more steeped in Indian thought than Yeats. He is more truly mystical than Yeats, even though his mysticism is tinged with a lot of

Theosophical occultism. Perhaps he is the only one of Western poets who has been able to understand the idea of the Mighty Mother, who alone knows 'the wounds that quiver unconfessed' and whose 'balmy touch soothes all pain away,' and in whom as Her children men have their mystic unity and brotherhood.

But it is when we come to Rabindranath Tagore that we find mysticism in its purest form finding expression in some of the sublimest poetry in the world. As the author says:

The most essential thing about his mysticism is that it has been understood as a vision and quality of being and never as the occult approach to phenomena that baffle the ordinary methods of scientific investigation. His mysticism is the result of spiritual culture and has nothing to do with spirits or other preternatural phenomena.

The author has copiously illustrated his remarks with appropriate quotations in translation from the original Bengali also.

Prof. Bose says about Tagore:

As a poet his place is among the greatest of modern times. He is, perhaps, the greatest poet of his age. Time will decide whether he is to be placed among the greatest poets of all ages. He will, I believe, be recognized as one of the greatest lyric poets of the world.

Prof. Bose has also dealt with several other aspects of the life and poetry of all the three great poets.

The book is enriched with an excellent introduction by Dr. J. H. Cousins, himself no mean poet of beauty and mysticism.

All lovers of good literature will find Prof. Bose's book very entertaining and thought-provoking.

Our only complaint is that Prof. Bose has here, out of characteristic Indian modesty perhaps, underestimated the greatness of Tagore. We believe that future generations will give Tagore a place, if not as the greatest poets of all time, at least as one of the most honoured among the half a dozen greatest poets of the world.

**SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM.** TRANSLATED BY SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA. Published by Sri Rama-krishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. Pp. 222. Price Rs. 3-8.

*Srimad Bhagavatam* or 'the Wisdom of God' is an abridged rendering, in lucid prose, of the well-known Hindu classic which is undoubtedly the most practical and authoritative work on *bhakti*. The book under review is the Indian Edition of the earlier American publication. In condensing a voluminous work like the *Bhagavatam*,—which is by no means an easy task—the learned translator has ably accomplished his purpose of presenting the important and interesting portions of the original. 'Of this version, again, about half is summary and paraphrase rather than translation; the remainder, however, consisting of the teachings of Sri Krishna to his disciple Uddhava (Book xi), has been rendered without omission and with approximate literalness.'

Apart from its mythological aspect, the *Bhagavatam* contains a supremely spiritual message to all mankind. Its universal teachings find application even today. The translation retains the inner spirit and sublimity of the Sanskrit text. Though the *Bhagavatam* is highly popular in India, there are not many English translation of it. The present volume has appeared just in time when numerous foreigners in this country are getting interested in Hindu religious thought. The glossary of Sanskrit terms at the end of the book will prove useful specially to non-Indian readers.

**REALITY OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD.** By THOMAS R. KELEY. Published by Friends' Home Service Committee, Friends' House, Euston Road, London, N. W. 1. Pp. 35. Price 1s.

We would recommend a perusal of this book to all those moderns who find it difficult to believe in the reality of God and the spiritual world because of intellectual scepticism, though their hearts would fain acknowledge their belief in 'a serene and everlasting Bosom on which to lay our heads and be at peace'. The author has made out an intellectually convincing *prima facie* case for the reality of God. He rightly says:

But, if religious experience cannot be proved to be entirely reliable by the pragmatic argument, is religion alone in this respect? Far from it. I would remind you that the whole of experimental science which we revere today rests upon such arguments, and faces the same predicament. Every scientific theory that is supported by the experimental evidence rests upon the fallacy of affirming the consequent. The outcome is that the whole of scientific theory is probably only, not absolutely, certain. But this fact has not paralyzed science, which proceeds all undisturbed by the logical effect, and with open mind, lets down its faith upon its findings. For science rests upon faith, not upon certainty.

Like a true Quaker, the author pleads for direct communion with God without intermediaries like Jesus or Mohammed; and he stresses the value of

prayer in the cleansing of the soul for fitting it for unity with God, and pleads for fellowship among men on a spiritual basis. Thousands in spiritual doubt will find much relieving light in this small pamphlet.

### SANSKRIT

**BRAHMA - SUTRA - BHASHYA - NIRNAYAH.** By SWAMI CHIDGHANANANDA PURI. Published by the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Luca, Benares City. Pp. 263.

Swami Chidghanananda Puri of the Ramakrishna Mission, who in his previous *ashrama* was known as Rajendra Nath Ghosh, is a well-renowned scholar of all the branches of Indian philosophy. His profound scholarship of the Vedanta philosophy in particular is undoubtedly an enviable distinction which every scholar of Indian philosophy may well be proud of. He is an author and editor of a good number of philosophical treatises which are well known to all scholars of Indian philosophy and as such need hardly any mention here. The present volume under review has not only maintained the high tradition regarding this great savant but has also demonstrated his originality of thinking and his power of tackling philosophical problems in a new way. Indeed the Swamiji has beaten a new track in coming to a decision that the commentary of Shankara on the Vedanta aphorisms of Vyasa is the only faithful one. I have no doubt that any scholar of Vedanta philosophy who may go through this excellent treatise will certainly be convinced of the author's arguments which are advanced here in a mathematically accurate way. The reader will simply be charmed to note the Herculean labour which the revered Swamiji has undertaken to find out the truth about the authenticity of the commentaries on Vedanta aphorisms. His is undoubtedly the process of a seeker after truth. He has thoroughly compared and contrasted all the extant commentaries on Vedanta aphorisms of Vyasa and has found out some rules by the application of which one can easily and undoubtedly find out the truth regarding the authenticity of the commentaries on Vyasa *bhashya*. I have nothing to say except praising the revered Swamiji for the excellent treatise he has presented before the Sanskrit-knowing world.

But one point I should like to note. The historical investigations and some other allied discussions in the beginning of the treatise seem to some extent irrelevant. Nevertheless, I can unhesitatingly recommend the book to all scholars of Indian philosophy and I have no hesitation in declaring that this volume will certainly give them much pleasure and help them in realizing the truth from a new angle of vision.

DINESH CHANDRA GUHA

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS' HOME, CALCUTTA

We have received the prospectus and the report for 1944 of this excellent institution. It is unique among the many hostels for college students in Calcutta in that it keeps up the true ideals of religion and Indian culture before the boys. Inexperience combined with exuberance of youth and the newly-found freedom from the guidance of elders often leads astray many a well-meaning youth for want of sympathetic and enlightened guidance. The atmosphere of a modern city with its currents and cross-currents of warring ideas and ideologies confuses immature minds and often produces in them a slackening of moral and spiritual values. In the institution whose report we are reviewing guardians will find that their boys acquire the stabilizing and invigorating influence of the ideas of religion preached by Swami Vivekananda. While licence in any form is not tolerated, full liberty that is necessary for all healthy growth is guaranteed to the students.

The boarding and lodging arrangements are very good, and the Home is a hostel recognized by the Calcutta University authorities. It has very influential and educated people on its Advisory Board. The examination results are highly gratifying, several boys securing scholarships. Though mainly intended to help poor and meritorious students, the Home takes in a few paying boarders also, to whom a few seats are allotted. Students requiring coaching in any subject get it free of charge.

We wish the institution a long life in its noble career of service to our young men.

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION INSTITUTE OF CULTURE, CALCUTTA REPORT FOR 1941-43

The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, has completed the sixth year of its existence in 1943. During the period under review it served to popularize the ideas and ideals for which it stands. Expansion of activities in furtherance of the aims and objects of the Institute was much restricted by the emergency created by the war. In May 1943 the Institute moved to its present premises (4A, Wellington Square).

**Classes and Study Circles:** The subjects taken up for study and discussion during the period under review were Indian History and Culture, *Patanjali Yogadarshana*, *Upanishad*, *Vedantasara*, *Sankhyasara*, *Advaitasiddhi*, and *Yogasara*. Professors of the Calcutta University and Colleges conducted the classes and led the discussions.

**Lectures:** Altogether 47 lectures were delivered by distinguished scholars, some of whom were visitors to India, on various topics of social,

religious, and cultural importance. The average weekly attendance was 102.

**Library and Reading Room:** In 1941 the gift of Dr. Baridbaran Mukerji's well-known Library considerably enriched the library of the Institute. The collection comprised 24,373 volumes valued at about Rs. 1,00,000. Steps have been taken for organization of the library. Cataloguing is in process by an up-to-date international method. As an emergency measure the library was removed, in April 1942, to a village for safety. At the close of 1943 the number of volumes was 25,719. The Reading Room contained 17 journals, and the average number of daily readers was 25.

**Cultural Relations:** One of the notable activities of the Institute is to establish cultural contact with interested individuals and institutions in different parts of the world. Visitors from all walks of life were invited to hold an exchange of views. On account of the war foreign visitors were not many during the years under review. But a number of members of the military services, from different countries, took keen interest in the Institute.

**Musical Recitals:** Recitals of vocal and instrumental music, and recitations were arranged on more than one occasion.

**Publications:** *The Cultural Heritage of India* and other publications of the Institute continued to be in great demand during these years. Due to scarcity and high cost of printing materials, no new books could be published.

**Students' Home:** During 1941-43 an average number of 9 students were in residence each year, of whom 4 came out successful in the M.A. Examination, 3 each in the B.A. and B.Sc., and one each in the M.Sc., B.Com., I.Sc., and Wireless Telegraphy.

The Institute has made appreciable progress, and its different departments call for expansion. The growth of the library has made the need for spacious accommodation more urgent. A large lecture hall, a spacious reading room, and a guest house are very much needed. The scheme of the Institute can be effectively and fully worked out only when it is housed in a permanent building of its own. These buildings, including the land, will cost about Rs. 5,00,000. An appeal is made to the generous public to help towards the realization of this scheme.

### VEDANTA SOCIETY, SAN FRANCISCO

We have received the programme of work of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, San Francisco, for the month of March 1945. Of the bi-weekly lectures delivered by the Swami-in-charge mention may be made of the following: 'What has Religion done for India?', 'How to judge Spiritual Values', 'Chaitanya, Incarnation of Divine Love', and 'The Realm of Eternal Peace'.

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. L

AUGUST, 1945

No. 8



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वराञ्जिष्ठोधत ।”

“Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI SHIVANANDA

BELUR MATH, JUNE 1930

The month of June, and it is terribly hot. Mahapurush Maharaj hardly gets any sleep at night these days. And because of this he feels out of sorts in the earlier part of the day and he is compelled to receive visitors sitting on his bed. This morning, after breakfast, he was pacing up and down on the verandah. It is a great strain to walk, still he is trying to keep up the habit. Soon he got tired and sat down on a chair. Later he was going back to his room to rest. He was walking too slowly. Turning to those near-by he remarked laughingly, 'Toddler !' Going back to his bed he said, 'Just fancy what the body has been reduced to. I cannot walk even a few steps. Literally an invalid. All this is the play of the Mother. At one time with this body I have climbed hills, walked endless miles, and performed such austerities. But now? I can walk hardly a dozen steps. And for a long time now I have had to give up going downstairs. In the old days how I used to knock about ! By Thakur's will I have had enough travelling. Now I do not feel the least desire to go anywhere. Thanks to him, all desire for going or coming has left me. Now I have no trace of desire in

me. I am happy in whatever condition he keeps me. As my physical activity is decreasing, so is my mental activity increasing. The more the mind is turning away from the outer world, the more it is turning to the inner world. And graciously enough Thakur is revealing to me clearly the thing that is beyond body, mind, and intellect. Now it is inside that life functions most intensely. By Thakur's grace I am having all those experiences that the scriptures speak of. I am not the body, the six changes belong to the body and not to me. I am that Eternal Being, the unchangeable, the ever pure, the ever enlightened, the ever free. I have this knowledge now to the full, beyond all shadow of doubt. That is why any experience of the body—pleasure or pain, disease and old age, does not disturb me. These are the inescapable conditions of flesh. Perceptions that once came only through effort come now spontaneously, naturally. Through Thakur's grace all those mystic experiences are always within my grasp. The path to the abode of bliss is clear of all obstacles. Time, space, person—all these belong to the phenomenal world. Once the mind is merged in God-conscious-

ness, you lose all sense of them. When I was around Almora, I would often come across lovely places. They were wonderfully congenial to spiritual practices. Even in natural beauty they were beyond all compare. While meditating there, I would find everything vanishing—hills, trees, feeling of cold and heat,—with the first sign of the mind going inward. I did not even feel that I had a body, what to speak of those things. Once the mind loses itself in God who is the source of all beauty and who is also your beloved, it finds no interest in objective things nor does it derive any pleasure from them. All worldly pleasure palls on you once you taste the bliss of God, the Infinite. "Bliss is in the infinite, not in the finite. Infinitude itself is bliss." Only a tiny fraction of God is manifest as this universe; the rest is unmanifested. No one has ever known Him or can know Him. How can man know God, the Infinite, with his finite mind or intellect? That is why the Lord says in the Gita,

What is the good of your knowing the numberless things of the world?

Know this, in short, that I support it with a fraction of Myself.

"A fraction"—man does not know enough of this fraction, not to speak of the whole. True, with the progress of Western science many new discoveries are being made. Through intensive research new instruments have been devised, and with their help many new stars and planets are being discovered. But there are still many more things to be discovered, and scientists just do not know if there is any limit to them. Further, there is no guarantee

that the observations made by instruments are infallible. And oddly enough, if scientists propound a theory now, ten years after they summarily reject it. That is why Thakur used to say, "Mother, I do not want to know you. Who has ever known you or can know you? Only do this, mother, that I may never be deluded by your world-bewitching *maya*. And also grant me pure devotion to your lotus-feet." That is the object of life—attainment of devotion to Her lotus-feet by all means. There is no fear once the mind has reached the state of God-consciousness.

After attaining which nothing seems worth attaining,

Resting on which the greatest misfortune cannot shake you.

And that pure devotion, pure knowledge—they come through His grace. But, as it is, He invariably grants them. If you sincerely resign yourself to Him, He will surely take pity on you. You may roam all over the world, visit all the holy places, but it is of no avail unless you have His grace. That is why I say to the boys (i.e. the monks of the order) when they insist on going to their chosen places (for spiritual practice), "What will you gain by merely running about? Instead, stick here with complete resignation. You need not do anything else. Complete resignation—that is all that is needed." We too are here, completely resigned to Him. He has kindly given us a lot and is giving us more. And I sincerely pray that you all may have full devotion. (With eyes closed and hands upraised) "My goal is that sublime abode from where there is no return".

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Only that yogi  
Whose joy is inward,  
Inward his peace,  
And his vision inward,  
Shall come to Brahman  
And know nirvana.

—Bhagavad Gita

## ON THE EXPERIENCE OF THE ATMAN

By SAINT KABIR

Unutterable is the intuitional experience of the *atman*.  
Can the dumb man, after eating sugar candy, express its taste in words?

When the *atman* is realized, then there is neither gladness nor sorrow;  
Leaving aside all wrangling, still remains the knower of the *atman* like the  
flame of a lamp painted in a picture.

The experience of the *atman* is not a thing to be recorded in words,  
it is entirely a thing of one's own experience;  
Verbal record has as little importance after direct experience as the marriage  
procession has after the meeting of the bride and the bridegroom.

—Translated by Prof. S. N. L. Shrivastava, M.A.

## GOD'S WILL AND MAN'S WILL

By THE EDITOR

*He makes all, He knows all, the self-caused, the knower, the time of time (destroyer of time), who assumes qualities and knows everything, the master of nature and of man, the Lord of the three qualities (gunas), the cause of the bondage, the existence, and the liberation of the world. (Shweta. Up. VI. 16.)*

### I

When man, freed occasionally from his enjoyments and preoccupations of the bodily life, gets some leisure and is able to turn his thoughts towards an understanding of the why and wherefore of this world and his own place in it, he may be said to have become religious-minded. Himself being a creator in miniature, he conceives of a Being as the Creator of the whole of the visible universe. Naturally the maintenance of the universe must become the primary concern of its Creator. The destruction that man sees all around him has also to be attributed to the agency of the same Creator, since the premises underlying the conception of the Creator precludes the possibility of his having any rival to thwart him.

A study of the history of the growth of religious thought brings out clearly how the idea of the one Creator or God arose among men. In the Vedic religion we find the gods

of nature becoming subordinate to Indra, the god of heaven, for he is the wielder of the mighty thunderbolt. In puranic times we find Indra giving place to the worship of the Man-Gods like Rama and Krishna. Side by side with this transformation in the object of popular worship, we find an intellectual formulation synthesizing and co-ordinating the theory of Man-Gods with the metaphysical conception of Brahman, the supreme creator, preserver, and destroyer. In each of these aspects, that is, of Brahma as creator, of Vishnu as preserver, and of Shiva as destroyer, the Supreme Being is conceived apparently differentiating in order to carry on the work of the universe. Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva are three in the One, and the One is in the three. Thus the Supreme Being becomes immanent without losing His transcendence. The Man-Gods like Rama and Krishna become incarnations of Vishnu, the preserver aspect of the Supreme Being. These incarnations are God becoming Man, assuming a human

-form in order to help mankind.

The transformation of the nature gods also took another form. Proceeding on the assumption that what is in the macrocosm is in the microcosm and vice versa, the Vedic gods like Agni, Vayu, and others became the presiding deities of the various organs of the human body, and higher than all was the *atman*, the Supreme Being in the human body. (*Vide Aitareya Up. I; Brihad. Up. I. iii.*)

This latter process seems to us to be the unique contribution of the Indian mind to the problem of solving the apparently dual nature involved in ideas of God and the Universe as His creation. The microcosm is but the macrocosm in another form and name; there is no eternal contradiction or difference in substance between the Creator and His creation as is involved in a Creator not immanent in the universe. Neither the Jews, Christians, Mohammedans, nor Buddhists could rise to the heights of the vision of God which was vouchsafed to the sages of India. The mystics in later Christianity and Mohammedan sufis came nearest to this conception. Christ, indeed, did say, 'I and my Father are one'. But Christians have understood this to mean not that the Self in all men is the same God, but that Christ alone is mystically united with God, the Father. The fanaticism of Christianity is due to this faulty interpretation of Christ's teachings. The objective-minded, fiercely intolerant tribes of Europe were spiritually unprepared to grasp the great truth taught by Christ, the truth to which we have witnesses in the men of God-realization in every land. Moreover the tradition of the Hebrew race was in dead opposition to any such teaching. The Hebrew God was the tribal god, saving, guiding, and punishing the tribe like a sovereign despot ruling over his subjects. Even Christ had to put up with this sort of conception of a mighty God punishing the erring, and protecting the favoured, for he found that the people could not understand anything higher. To the people he taught in parables. He said, 'Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.' (*Matt. 7. 6.*) He spoke more directly to his disciples, but even they could not fully comprehend all that he taught them.

## II

According to the Vedic sages, God is above what we call good and evil. Good and evil exist only in our ways of looking at things. The followers of the dualistic religions, like Christianity and Mohammedanism, seem congenitally unable to grasp this idea. So, as against God, the All-Good, they had to put Satan, the All-Evil, in order to explain somehow the existence of evil in the universe. It is a pity that even in these days of scientific enlightenment we find many Christians brought up in the untenable dogmas of the Christianity of the Dark Ages unable to form a clearer conception of the nature of God and the universe; so strong is the force of traditional training.

However these things may be, the idea of God as omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient has gained general acceptance in all the religions. The degree in which this idea has influenced men in their actual lives has varied according as God was conceived as personal or impersonal. The circumstances of time, place, and race had also much to do in the shaping of the influence upon men of the idea of an omnipotent God.

God, as a person, was an easier conception than God, the impersonal. To the Jews, the Christians, the Mohammedans, and to many of the *bhakti* cults of India, God is a person. Some have preferred to call God as Father, others as Mother, and others by various other names. But one thing is common to all these conceptions of God as a person, namely, whatever happens in the universe does so because God has willed it so. 'Not a blade of grass moves but by His will', says the Hindu *bhakta*. 'Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered', said Christ to his disciples. (*Matt. 10. 29-30.*)

But then the question arises: If everything happens by God's will, wherein comes man's will, man's sense of being a free agent, his sense of moral and legal responsibility? Different schools of thought have tried to solve these apparently irreconcilable points of view. Some have advocated absolute determinism, while others have maintained with equal vehemence that man is completely free, and preach a theory of libertarianism.

The view, however, to which most thinkers would perhaps subscribe seems to be a theory which could harmonize the facts of the personal experience of freedom of choice with the omnipotence and omniscience of God, the truth of which is equally vouched for by the evidence of many of the saints, sages, and prophets who have moved the world.

Such a harmonious synthesis is only possible, however, if we lay equal stress on the transcendental and immanent aspects of God. We have not the space here to give a retrospect of the historical views on this subject, though that would be very interesting. We want to place before our readers at least the Hindu view, as it seems to us to present the least objections, logical and evidential. One important pre-condition in understanding the Hindu view on this point is that we must always keep in the background of our consciousness the oneness of the Whole in the midst of all this apparent manifoldness.

The Hindu posits that 'All this is verily Brahman'. In His transcendental aspect God is ever the same. In His immanent aspect, He Himself has become the gods, the angels, the elements, men, animals, and what not. '(In the transcendental aspect) there was only the One. He wanted to become many. (By His power) He created all *this*, and all else, if any, beyond *this*. Having created, He Himself entered into all that. Having entered, He became what is manifest and what is unmanifest, what is defined, and what is undefined, what is supported and what is not supported, what is endowed with knowledge and what is not endowed with knowledge, what appears as real to the senses and what appears as unreal to the senses.' (*Taittiriya Up.* II. 6.) As Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'I see that He has verily become all this. The only difference is in manifestation. In man, especially in the godly man, He is more manifest than in other things.' He once remarked, 'The heart of the devotee is the parlour of the Lord'.

### III

But the immanence of God does not lead to any pantheism or the worship of anything and everything as God, as most Western critics are apt to think. As Shankara says, 'The waves belong to the ocean, not the

ocean to the wave'. Nor do the immanence of God and His omnipotence do away with obvious facts of human experience, i.e. of freedom of choice and sense of moral responsibility. For these also are within God's providence. Men are responsible for their karma, good and bad, and reap the fruits thereof. The inequality of manifestation is due to the karma of each individual. But it is God Himself who is the giver of the fruits of actions as well as the causal agent with reference to all actions, whether good or evil. 'He makes him whom He wishes to lead up from these worlds do a good deed; and the Same makes him whom He wishes to lead down from these worlds do a bad deed.' (*Kaush. Up.* III. 8.) His creating all creatures in forms and conditions based on their former deeds is just what enables us to also call God the cause of the fruits of all actions.

Man is indeed the ostensible doer. But it is God who makes him do things. God's omnipotence and omniscience do not cut the ground from under the feet of man's sense of freedom and self-effort, but form the ground on which alone this apparent freedom of the individual can rest. All that he has, man derives from God. It is his sense of separateness from God that makes possible the idea of self-effort, moral responsibility, and the reality of all our pains and pleasures. But in reality nothing is separate from God. God's inscrutable power is in everything in this universe. The power of *vidya* makes for enlightenment and freedom, till we finally come to rest in God alone. The power of *avidya* makes for ignorance, forgetfulness of God, and a sense of the reality of the visible world only; it curtails our mental and physical freedom and leads us further down to the road leading to greater misery. Man's will is free in that it can choose to go up by the path of 'knowledge' or go down by the path of 'ignorance'. But it is only when man's separateness completely vanishes that he becomes one with God and realizes that man's will is also God's will in a way which he could not imagine before. As the Gita says, 'Neither agency, nor actions does the Lord create for the world, nor (does He bring about) the union with the fruit of action. It is *maya* that does it all. The Omnipresent takes no note of the merit or demerit of anyone. Knowledge is enveloped in ignorance,

hence do beings get deluded.' When a man's will merges in God's will, when through knowledge it is perceived that it is the will of God alone that prevails and the sense of being a separate doer is destroyed, then indeed comes full freedom. 'When the subject beholds no agent other than the *gunas* and knows that which is higher than the *gunas*, he attains to My being.' (Gita.) Till that time man's freedom will be only partial, bounded by his identification with the limited selves of body, mind, and intellect. From the truly metaphysical point of view it is God's will alone that works. But in order to make this a living and fruitful conception and to realize its truth, a man has to get over the limitations of his identification with the body and mind, the cause of the sense of his being a separate doer as well as the reaper of the fruits of his deeds. Only a man, who has become merged in God, who has lost his personal identity, and is able to perceive the hand of God in everything, can truly say, 'Not a blade of grass moves but by His will'. To all others who have not reached this state, man's will has got a greater or less freedom, and leads to more or less self-effort in order to obtain what he wants. To one who has realized the full immanence of God, there is nothing more to do, nothing more to attain. As Sri Ramakrishna said, from such a man all work drops off like water from a duck's back. But as the Gita says, rare indeed is such a great soul who sees the Lord in all things. To such a man there is no more man's will; all is God's will.

#### IV

Hindu spiritual teachers have made fitness of the pupil a *sine qua non* for receiving spiritual truths. We all recognize that preliminary training is necessary in almost all branches of learning. In modern days specialization has gone so far that not even the man with the greatest intellect can do much in any subject without undergoing all the preliminary training in that subject, before he can hope to learn the harder truths and become an expert. But when it comes to re-

ligion, we find people having confused ideas as regards the requirements of fitness for a pursuit of religious truth. Every man poses to be an authority on the subject of religion and will talk all sorts of irrelevant things on the subject of God and related matters. But religious truths can be comprehended properly by a man only after he has undergone the requisite preliminary training; and this training is as rigorous as, if not more than, the training that a person has to undergo in order to become a doctor, an engineer, an air-pilot, or a bacteriologist. As the *upanishads* say, 'But he who has not first turned away from wickedness, who is not tranquil and subdued, or whose mind is not at rest, he can never obtain the Self (even) by knowledge'. 'By truthfulness, indeed, by penance, right knowledge, and *brahmacharya* must that Self be gained.' 'Nor is that Self to be gained by one who is destitute of strength, or without earnestness, or without right meditation.' As in other branches of study, special aptitude and intense longing for success will go a long way in ensuring speedy attainment of knowledge. The one important qualification, therefore, for success in the religious line is that the person has to be completely moral. That is the first step in the discipline. The man who has not become established in the moral principles will not succeed in religion, just as a man without a knowledge of mathematics can never become a great engineer. One can, therefore, only pity the men who bring the charge that a belief in the omnipotence of God kills man's initiative and sense of moral responsibility. The fact rather seems to be that, unless a man is really moral, and puts forth the best exertions that he is capable of in developing his god-given powers of mind and body properly, it will not be possible for him to truly understand God's will and its nature. It is only when we *outgrow* our sense of self-effort and moral responsibility—not by shirking it—that we can truly understand that man's freedom and will have their ground and being in God's omnipotence, omniscience, and immanence.

## RELIGIOUS REVIVAL IN EAST AND WEST

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

Struggle for existence and survival of the fittest play the greatest part in life in the animal kingdom. This is also true of the animal-man who is ever ready to compete and fight with his fellow man and to gain ascendancy over him. Man is the greatest enemy of man; but man may as well be the greatest friend of man.

As the animal-man evolves in moral consciousness, he comes face to face with a new struggle. It is the struggle between his lower animal nature and his higher divine nature. He tries to gain mastery over himself, over his body, senses, mind and ego. As spiritual consciousness dawns on him, as he feels the presence of a mighty Existence, call that God, Brahman, or whatever you please—instead of remaining egocentric, he becomes cosmocentric. And he comes to possess, instead of the spirit of competition, that of co-operation; instead of the tendency to struggle for existence, the spirit of self-sacrifice and loving service.

This also should be the spirit of the various religions of the world. But unfortunately it is not so. What we actually find is this: There is enough religion to hate one another, but not enough to love one another.

While theologians are busy in establishing the superiority of their particular faiths, and also in creating cleavages, both the East and the West are coming closer to each other through other means, not because of, but in spite of religions.

Should not the religions stop quarrelling and fighting, and come to have a better understanding among themselves, and lend a helping hand in this meeting of the East and the West? This is the question that is rising in many thoughtful minds, both in the East and in the West.

Those who constantly quote the English poet Rudyard Kipling's lines—

'East is East and West is West,

And never the twain shall meet'

have neither the vision of the future, nor the knowledge of the past. They are even unconscious of what is happening in the present.

In spite of his jingoism, Kipling could not help declaring—

'There is neither East nor West,

Border, nor breed, nor birth.

When two strong men stand face to face  
Though they come from the ends of the  
earth.'

We find that through all the ages Eastern thoughts have been moving westward, and Western thoughts have been flowing eastward. Little do we realize how we people of the modern world are products of both Eastern and Western thoughts—Eastern religious thoughts and Western scientific thoughts.

When I hear people speaking too much of orientals and oriental religions, I feel like asking, 'Who was Christ? Where was he born? Where did Christianity come from?' Among the world's greatest religions there is none which has Western origin. Asia has been the mother of the great religions. Asiatic spiritual ideals have been influencing the West since most ancient days, just as Western-Graeco-Roman thoughts also were permeating and influencing the East in some form or other.

Living Eastern civilizations—like those of India and China—are very old. In India and China we think in terms of thousands of years, instead of centuries as in the West.

The movement of life is rhythmic. There are ebbs and flows in the tides of life. The East—particularly India and China—after thousands of years of active life, tired and went to sleep for a time. But it was sleep and not the sign of death. The young West, bubbling up with an exuberance of energy and activity, thought that the East was dying, and that she alone was destined to dominate the world as she pleased. We see the signs of a new awakening all over the East—in the so-called Near East, Middle East, and Far East. The East in a large measure is already awake! The stimulus has come from the West, but the vitality that is expressing itself in the East is her own.

'Never before in our history', says a Chinese author, 'have our youth been so enthusiastic over matters of education, religion, and social service.' In India too we have been seeing the stirring of a new life.

Both in India and China the intoxication of the wine of Western culture for a time threatened to bring about a moral and spiritual chaos, but the danger has passed. People are feeling the necessity of a new adjustment. They want to remain true to what is best in their own culture and assimilate what is best in the culture of the West.

The havoc that Christian missionaries and Western colonists did in the lands inhabited by primitive people could not be repeated in India and China. The age-long cultures of China and India possess a strange vitality which can stand the onslaught of time.

If in the field of religion we find Christian agencies flooding the East with editions of the Christian Bible, we also see Chinese and Hindu ethical and spiritual thoughts are spreading very much in the West. The orientalists of the last century helped a great deal in this respect. Many books embodying the wisdom of the Orient—particularly of China and India—are being published in the West. China mostly speaks of the wisdom of her ancient teachers—Lao Tse, the mystic; Confucius, the great humanist; Mencius, the democratic philosopher. India, on the other hand, is presenting not only the ancient teachings of the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the later teachings of Patanjali and Sankara, but also the wisdom of modern teachers like Ramakrishna and Vivekananda who have embodied the ancient teachings in their lives and are presenting them with a new power and meaning. They are teaching us that the ancient, eternal, spiritual ideals can still be followed and realized in our chaotic modern world.

The greatest contribution of the West is her physical science, for her religion has come from the East. All over the East where religion and science have not been in conflict as in the West, Western scientific culture is being greatly assimilated and applied. Western materialistic ideas for a time seemed to upset the East. But that was more or less a passing phase. The age-long moral and spiritual culture of the East is helping her

children in gaining a new, much-needed balance.

While the East has been assimilating 'the best of what the West has to offer, the West has been greatly negligent of the wisdom of the East. 'Hitherto,' says a Western thinker,<sup>1</sup> 'East and West have between them boxed the compass of error, the East in an excessive zeal for Westernization, the West in an indifference to the treasures of the East. The time has come to adjust the balance . . . In particular, it is for the schools and universities of Europe and America . . . to study the wisdom of the East.'

'The Nordic and Latin civilizations depend largely for their excellence on what they have learnt from Palestine, Rome, and Greece. This pasture is still as sweet as ever if freshly cropped. But they have now chewed the cud so long that it is losing its savour, and it is absurd that Western studies should be restricted to these three familiar civilizations, when the unfamiliar civilizations of China, Arabia, and India lie green before the hungry mind.'

'From China they will learn that fellow-feeling begets righteousness, and that righteousness is the foundation of good government. . . . From India they will learn that man is in true nature a *bodhisat*, a saviour who sees all living beings as his other selves; that work is sacrament that opens the eyes to a Moral God, through whom is at last revealed the Eternal Godhead that is Bliss Supreme.'

Both in the East and in the West mere material ideals are sure to lead to ruin. So what is needed is an intensification of spiritual ideals. And this can be achieved by the awakening of a true religious consciousness in the soul of man.

We need the guidance of the higher ideals of religion. Spiritual ideals must enoble our thoughts and sentiments. Spiritualized ideas and emotions must guide our activities, individual and collective. For this we need a general religious revival both in the East and the West.

Now the question is—How is that to be brought about? There are three alternatives.

1. Many Christian missionaries—both Catholic and Protestant—have been dreaming of the conquest of all other religions by their brand of Christianity. This they imagine will produce a great religious revival. They

<sup>1</sup> H. N. Spalding, *Civilization in East and West*.

have used all means, fair or foul, in getting converts in many lands, particularly in India and China, for the last several centuries. What have they achieved?

'In India, roughly 1.6 per cent of the population are listed as Christian; in China, three quarters of 1 per cent.' When are the rest of the people in India and China going to embrace Christianity? The dream of Christian religious imperialism for world domination is doomed to failure. This desire for world conquest, even at the sacrifice of spiritual principles, has made the Christian Church spiritually bankrupt.

A Christian thinker, Dr. Hocking, hopes that some day in the future Christianity will become the world faith. But in order to do that, present-day Christianity must come to possess some of the characteristics which other religions possess but which Christianity does not. Let us dismiss this visionary idea and consider the second course.

2. The second alternative is to evolve a grand eclectic religion by taking the best of every one of the great religions. We may take head from one, hands from another, feet from a third, trunk from a fourth and so on. We may create a monstrosity but can never give life to it. So a religious revival is out of the question by creating a fanciful, lifeless system.

3. The third alternative is to vivify the existing religions through the exchange and assimilation of mutual ideals. This seems to be the only practical course.

It is a well-known fact to students of Western thought that the study of modern biological evolution has greatly influenced comparative religion. 'Comparative religion does not imply a special kind of religion. It is only a particular method of treating religion. Comparative religion notes the facts of resemblance as well as difference. It tells us that all religions have had a history and that none is final or perfect.'

Professor Frederick Max Muller who gave a great impetus to the study of comparative religion emphatically pointed out—'I hold that there is a divine element in every one of the great religions of the world. I consider it blasphemous to call them the work of the devil, when they are the work of God; and I hold that there is nowhere any belief in God

except as the result of a divine revelation, the effect of a divine spirit working in man.'

We live in a world where many religions have met. All the religions are the products of various influences. Religious thoughts are like streams. They get contributions from the soil through which they pass; and they also come in contact with other streams and are enriched.

Thoreau, the Concord sage, said, 'The pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred water of the Ganges.' Romain Rolland speaks of the confluence of the Jordan and the Ganges. All this is happening before our very eyes, and in our own lives. Not only the Jordan and the Ganges but all the cultural streams are meeting. Let us consider some of these main streams briefly.

A. Hinduism—Recent excavations in the Punjab and Sind valley have unearthed a civilization at least fifty centuries old. In India these pre-Vedic elements, early and later Vedic culture, Dravidian and Kolarian ideas and ideals have all become fused. What is called *Hinduism* is a confederacy of faiths, a commonwealth of religions. All Schools of Hinduism in some form or other believe in (1) the Atman, potential divinity of man, (2) Brahman or the Supreme Spirit, (3) the ideal of self-realization, (4) the paths of Yoga leading to direct spiritual experience.

Hinduism holds that all religions are paths to the Truth; all souls will attain salvation in due course; world brotherhood can be based only upon the Divine principle but not upon any personality. The ideal is not toleration but acceptance of all paths as true.

B. Buddhism—According to Buddha, 'Truth is God', and the Truth to be realized by right comprehension, right speech, right conduct, and right meditation.

In India, Buddhism was reabsorbed. But the streams flowed out and fertilized the soil of many lands—Ceylon, Siam, Burma, Thibet, China, and other countries. In China, Buddhism blended with Taoism and Confucianism.

To Lao Tse—there is one real being, it may be called 'Tao' but the word is a substitute for 'the name which cannot be named'. Tao is the source of all things, omnipotent through non-assertion. Tao implies also the inner order of the universe.

Confucius was a great humanist. His system is not a religion in the ordinary sense of the term, but a system of ethics. Confucius stood for righteousness. To him the family tie was the sacred tie. It promoted the stability of society and the nation.

Northern Buddhism brought to China a well-developed impersonal world-view and the absolute nature of the spiritual law. The Bodhisattvas of Buddhism were believed to bring the truths of religion to the common man. Kwan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy, 'stands for the direct concern of the highest in the lot of every man'.

**C. Christianity**—This religion had its origin from ancient Judaism which is the product of various influences, Egyptian, Babylonian, and Persian. Judaism strongly believes in absolute monotheism—in a single universal God. Judaic mysticism holds that man—made in the image of God—has direct access to his heavenly Father without the intervention of a Son.

Christianity in its origin is a blending of various elements. It further mingled with the Graeco-Roman culture. With its stress on the personality of Christ it became a mighty imperialistic religion. Christian theology was influenced by Aristotle, while mysticism by Neo-Platonism, which bear the mark of ancient Hindu influence.

In all the Christian denominations, Roman Catholic, Orthodox Greek, Protestants, Episcopalean, there shines forth Christ's burning love for God and overflowing love for man.

**D. Islam** is a product of many influences, including Judaism and Christianity. Islam became a dynamic religion. Mohammed's living faith in God and in his own mission fired his followers with a tremendous vitality. Islam has been regarded as a fighting religion. The record of Christianity also has been similar, even more so.

But Islam has its cultural side also. Bagdad, the seat of the ancient Caliphs, was a city of great learning. When the Mohammedans conquered Spain, Cordova became the great centre science and art in medieval Europe. Mohammedans became the great carriers of the ancient Greek culture and the scientific culture of Eastern countries to Europe. This helped in bringing about the renaissance of Europe.

The great merit of Islam is the simplicity of its creed and worship. It possesses a unique democratic spirit which rises above race, country, or colour. This makes a Mohammedan a brother to every other Mohammedan—an ideal not realized to this extent by any other religion.~

Islam, too, has its mystics also in the sufis. In Bahaiism, Islam finds a new expression with its emphasis on universalism—spirit of tolerance towards all religions. Bahaiism emphasizes the importance of meditation—which 'is the key for opening the doors of mysteries'.

This cursory view of the great religions reveals that each religion has some outstanding characteristics, and none possesses all the elements we need for improving ourselves and the world we live in. All the religions have merits and demerits, and they can all acquire a new strength and increased usefulness through the exchange and assimilation of mutual ideals.

The greatest common factor in all religions is the Eternal Presence of the Divine Spirit. As Professor Max Muller observed—'This constant sense of the presence of God is indeed the common ground on which . . . the great temple of the future is to be erected, in which Hindus and non-Hindus may join hands and hearts in worshipping the same Supreme Spirit—who is not far from every one of us, for in Him we live, move and have our being.'

By following the various religious systems in our modern days Sri Ramakrishna realized this central theme and goal of all religions. He tells us from his direct experience, 'The unilluminated man in his ignorance says that his religion is the only true one, and that it is the best. But when his heart is illuminated with the light of true knowledge, he knows that above all the wars of sects and creeds presides the One, indivisible, eternal, all-knowing Bliss. It is invoked by some as God, by some as Allah, by some as Hari, and by others as Brahman.'

This spirit of universalism was proclaimed by Swami Vivekananda, Sri Ramakrishna's disciple, at the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1898. He offered the ideal of a religion which 'will have no place for persecution or intolerance in its policy, which will

recognize divinity in every man and woman, and whose whole scope . . . will be centred in aiding humanity to realize its own true divine nature. Offer such a religion and all the nations will follow you. The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth.'

For reviving our spiritual life, we must stress the central theme. We need the ideal of self-realization. And along with that, we also need all that is great and good in each religion. We need the ideal of the potential

divinity of man and the spirit of unity in diversity of the Hindu sages. We need the message of righteousness and peace of Buddha; we need the practical mysticism of Lao Tse; and the stabilizing humanism of Confucius; we need the burning love for God and Man of Christ; and the living faith in God and the unique democratic spirit of Mohammed. We must learn how to make our life richer and fuller.

Do we want a religious revival? If so, let us first of all vivify our own spiritual life by a conscious exchange and assimilation of mutual ideas and ideals. If we want the world to change, let us first of all begin with ourselves.

## A BACKWARD GLANCE AT PRABUDDHA BHARATA'S FIFTY VOLUMES

BY ST. NIHIL SINGH

(Continued)

### 3. The Battery is Charged

The man who quits the world of the senses and enters the world of renunciation—or, as I interpret, the world of service without the lure of reward—wanders about the mother-land. In this way he becomes acquainted with every mood and tense of Mother India.

Here she is fruitful. She smiles. Her progeny, numerous and multiplying, are blessed with bumper crops of staples and seeds, fruits and nuts, cottons and cords.

There she, in a sportive mood, has spread sand in a magnitudinous, almost unending sheet. She has driven water a hundred, maybe two or three hundred, feet below the surface shining iridescent in the sun. Her sons and daughters are compelled to sweat and to toil and withal to lead a narrow existence.

There, again, her breasts swell. Or, with seemingly rash resolve, she leaps skywards, and with giant's pertinacity, stays up in the air. The prospect she presents may be full of allure, restful to the eye and soothing to the nerves. Or the caked mud, reinforced with shale, or slate, or mayhap rock-ribbed, may, for a change, look drab and even depressing.

As the man who has renounced the world of transient pleasure in quest of the sphere of eternal bliss proceeds, often on foot, bare of sock or shoe, from Kanya Kumari (the Cape Comorin of the cartographers) to the inner Himalayan recesses, and from Dwarka to Jagannath Puri, he notes that the sons and daughters of Ind display greater diversity of form and feature, colour, hair, habiliment, and habit, than even the motherland from whose womb they have sprung. He finds, however, that when he appears at the door in the north he receives a handful of rice or flour as he had done in the south. He learns, too, that he is no oftener sent away without his dole in the west than he is in the east. At every step he is, indeed, reminded that an invisible but remarkably strong thread of canon and custom, conviction and culture, binds together the elements, in exterior so varied. \* \* \*

After receiving *sanyasa* and, in token of it, exchanging home for homelessness, Narendranath Dutta was to extinguish the name he had hitherto borne. What was his shaven-pated, tall, broad-shouldered figure, now in the renouncer's *gerua* (ochre) robe, to be called?

His guru—the Paramahansa Ramakrishna—had spoken of him as Kamalaksha. That Sanskrit term connoted 'lotus-eyed'.

The lotus, to Hindus, is the flower of flowers—beautiful in form and beautiful in hue, whether creamy white, pink, or blue. In Hindu symbology, the lotus, with its feet hidden in the ooze and its pure head splashed with sunlight as it sways in the breeze just above the surface of the water in which it is growing, represents the soul tethered to the earth yet refusing to be of the earth.

Through instinct rather than reflection, the newly initiated sanyasi decided that this appellation—Kamalaksha—beloved of the guru, was too sacred to be bandied about. As, after a period of contemplation—or self-realization, as he put it—he set out upon a pilgrimage of the motherland, he called himself 'Vividishananda'. When the light he shed, as he plodded on foot inevitably towards the 'Last Rock of India', attracted the multitude, he sought peace by slipping away. The next point, miles and miles distant, where he recontacted the populace, he allowed himself to be addressed as 'Satchidananda'.

'Vivekananda' was not assumed till later. Of this I shall make mention in the proper place.

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In the course of this *pradakshina* (peregrination) that was begun in 1891, the high-souled sanyasi learnt many things about India and her children.

One of these was that, despite all statements to the contrary, the people did have a *lingua Indica* of their very own. By means of it he could contact Indians of the south, as well as of the north, Indians of the east and of the west.

It was no alien speech. It was of the soil. Even if the belief concerning the origin of the Indo-Aryans in the northern latitudes of Europe were correct, it had been in use here for many thousands of years.

It was Sanskrit. It meant 'refined speech' or the speech of the refined—the cultured.

In these degenerate days of the Kali Yuga (Iron Age) the number of Indians who pursue Sanskritic studies is sadly limited.' If Vivekananda found himself hampered by that limitation, he, nevertheless, could use,

as the medium for the exchange of thought, one of its daughters—more especially Hindi. This he found was pretty well understood over a wide, wide area.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the Presidency of Madras he had, however, to fall back, time and again, upon his knowledge of the Rulers' tongue, except when conversing with men of the puhdit class. No small wonder was caused by the ability of a person garbed in the *gerua* (ochre) robe—the symbol of sanyasa—to speak English effortlessly and effectively. Many even of the men who went to him out of curiosity felt irresistibly drawn to him. The more serious-minded among his auditors elected to walk upon the path upon which he set their feet—a path half as old as the Bay that lapped the shores of Madras, yet possessing the fascination of a track cut only that moment through the jungle of life.

Among these was a Tamilian, then in the early twenties—Rajam by name. Born in 1872 in the small village of Batlagundu in the Madura district, shyness had largely cut him off from the company of other boys. The time that he, in his teens, would have given to fun and frolic had he been like other lads, he devoted to studies. Literature, especially poetry, appealed to him.

Liking for Shakespeare, Byron, Keats, Shelley, and Wordsworth formed a link between him and his professors at the Christian College in Madras. Methodists by denomination, some of them were Scots, remarkably intelligent and even more remarkably helpful.

Love for Nature's manifestations, of which some of the English poets sang, had also the effect of turning this young Tamilian's mind upon itself. This despite the influence exercised in the contrary direction by his teachers, mostly hard-headed, matter-of-fact men.

Much questioning led him towards metaphysics. Search for the One Cause behind all causes brought his soul back from wanderings in the Western fields—largely Wordsworthian—of pantheism to the forests of the motherland. There he heard, in his fancy, the *vidyarthi* (I spell the word in the South India way) asking and the *acharya* answering. There he saw, with his mind's eye, wisdom accumulating in the Motherland and the *upanishads* multiplying.

Love for the Infinite runs like a river of flame through the compositions of Tamil saints. These, Kamban and Tayumanavar in particular, set the young man's heart on fire.

Came a day when these complex currents of thought and feeling burst into visible expression. Rajam contributed an article to the pages of the magazine conducted by the staff and students of his college. This was, I believe, in the summer of 1892.

The article took the form of a critique of a poem that had been composed, some time earlier, by Professor Ranganatha Mudaliyar (evidently of a shudra sub-caste). It had struck Rajam as being artificial in character. It was composed in something after the fashion of poets of the Middle Ages, who, compared with the ancients, were as a lump of rock-salt to a snow flake freshly falling from the sky.

In clearly indicating this, the youthful critic showed both discernment and courage. What was still more important, he unconsciously revealed how his mind was cutting through the showy outer-crust shallowness down to the core of our culture.

The call of the language he had learnt at his mother's knee became more and more clamant. He began writing in Tamil a chronicle of his spiritual struggles. This he cast, as many another person similarly circumstanced has done, in the form of fiction. The thatch of verbiology that he, with great labour, put over the spring gushing from the heart failed, however, to hide the joy mingled with the fast-flowing stream of self-revelation. Rajam's soul had come upon 'a fountain, all undefiled and pure, to slake its thirst'. It was triumphant.

According to one who read the novel in the original—an advantage to me denied—it was interspersed with expressions chiselled and polished by the masters of Tamil, particularly the afore-mentioned Kamban. Shelley's and Wordsworth's cadences and concepts mingled with these.

Rajam liked to live in Madras because, as he put it, he could lose himself 'in the wilderness of houses and be obscure'. This proved to be a choice far wiser than he could have dreamt.

There, in 1895, he chanced upon the man who was to touch his soul with a flame that was to consume such dross as had not already been burnt away—that was at the same time, to illumine his mind. This was, as mentioned before, the Swami Vivekananda.

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In no time at all a resolution matured within Rajam's mind. He would strive to pass on to others the inspiration and illumination he had received. The means he was to adopt towards that end was to be a magazine of 16 pages including the cover, to be issued monthly from Madras.

The inaugural number (July 1896) began with a statement of the editor's aims and intentions, headed, as was customary, 'Ourselves'. Rajam expressed the view that 'but a few years earlier' no such periodical could have been possible. 'The promise of many a Western "ism" had', he explained, 'to be tried out'. Madras, it must be remembered, had been, for some years, the sacred capital of the Blavatsky-Olcott cult of Theosophy, described and hated by missionaries.

Then, too, 'the problem of life had itself been forgotten . . . in the noise and novelty of the steam-engine and the electric tram'. As was inevitable, it was, however, found out, in time, that 'steam-engines and electric trams do not clear up the mystery (of mysteries); they only thicken it'. When that discovery was made, the 'cry like that of a hungry lion, arose for religion and things of the soul'.

Science stepped out of its fume-filled laboratories: but the 'tabloids' it offered failed to satisfy the heart's cravings. Its 'theories of evolution and doctrines of heredity did not go deep enough.'

Agnosticism did not lag behind. It 'offered its philosophy of indifference, but no amount of that kind of opium eating could cure the fever of the heart'.

The occident, fast being driven from Christianity towards the vortex of materialism, had already unloaded missionaries upon the East. The Christian creed, split up into denominations, that these men and women offered, would not, however, fit India's

needs. India had, in fact, 'grown too big for the coat' of their manufacture.

\* \* \*

Something else had happened, moreover. The cultural tide had turned.

Till 1893 India had only received missionaries. In that year the movement 'in reverse' began—began imperceptibly, but time was to show that it was to gather force.

The *sanyasi* who inaugurated it was young—unknown abroad. He went to an American who, after fighting in the Civil War in his own country, had become enamoured of Madame H. P. Blavatsky's 'Theosophy' and had his headquarters in Madras. It was immediately plain to Satchidananda, as he had given his name, that Colonel Olcott looked upon the Indian's intention as presumptuous and curtly refused to countenance it.

The Maharaja of Khetri—a small State in Rajputana—who had formed a much shrewder estimate of the young sadhu's capacity than Colonel Olcott had done, as soon proved to be the case, speeded the Hindu missioner. He paid out of his own pocket, without the asking, the expenses for the voyage. He also insisted that the young man be called 'Vivekananda', and thence onward the Swami stuck to that name.

Little though it was then suspected, Vivekananda's arrival in the United States of America was destined to be an event in man's inner life. Henceforth the wisdom dammed up in India since ancient times was to flow outwards—not merely would the Palestinian flood-waters, twisted and turned in Europe and America, lash against Indian belief and undermine Indian institutions.

The Swami's steps, after his landing in North America, had been directed seemingly by some unseen agency, towards Chicago in the middle-western state of Illinois—some fifteen years before it became my home for a time. A Parliament was about to meet there.

Strange though it may sound to our ears, attuned to the din emanating from the European chancelleries and their adjuncts, the war offices, it was to meet, not for purposes of pushing back or obliterating national frontiers in imperial interests. Nor was it designed for exploring the natural resources of one people by another people largely or wholly for the benefit of the exploiters. It

was not even meant for participating in fun and frolic that at times results in the destruction of vast numbers of bipeds and quadrupeds and often of the soul itself.

No. Man had foregathered there from the four corners of the world for purely pacific purposes—purposes of profit to the inner man. They were to compare notes, on cultural subjects. This they were to do in a spirit of understanding and appreciation—not of contention and conquest, which often vitiate missionary enterprises.

Arrived at the 'Parliament of Religions' hardly a minute before twelve o'clock and wholly lacking credentials, Vivekananda was made welcome. Asked to address the distinguished audience, he, in his India-born humility, spoke not to strangers from strange lands, bowing to strange gods, but to his 'brothers' from near and from far—mostly far.

The eternal wisdom our sages and saints had been gathering through the ages, formed the theme of his discourse. He, nevertheless, spoke in terms so simple as to be easily understood by one and all. The words flowing from his lips lifted the audience off its feet. From that moment men and women all over the United States of America took pride in becoming his pupils.

It was not strange that the Hindu who had dared to start the missionary movement 'in reverse' should be assailed by persons who, till then, had been the only missioners. They set into circulation nauseating stories about his morals. They accused him of holding clandestine commerce with servants in homes to which he had been admitted as an honoured guest.

An attack also came from another quarter. Olcott, back in Madras, denounced the sanyasi as a charlatan and gave particulars of the interview he had had with the young man, then 'posing' as the Swami Satchidananda.

An attempt was made, too, to pooh-pooh his work in the United States of America. It originated from Calcutta. To this I will, however, refer in a subsequent section of this article, to which it rightfully belongs.

A little later the Swami went to Britain. There, too, he was acclaimed Teacher as enthusiastically as he had been in America. This was even a greater marvel: for Britons

cherished the illusion that they had been born to bear the white man's burden in Asia and Africa. Such an illusion is soul-destroying. The writer of 'Ourselves' in the inaugural issue of this magazine was deeply affected by this turn of the cultural tide. As he wrote :

A Sanyasin from our midst carries the altar fire across the seas. The spirit of the *Upanishads* makes . . . progress in distant lands. The procession develops into a festival. Its noise reaches Indian shores and behold! our Motherland is awakening.

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AWAKENED INDIA was, fittingly, the name given to the magazine. It was, in reality, the Englishing of the title, for the express benefit of readers who could not understand the Sanskrit phrase, the 'PRABUDDHA BHARATA'.

In the young editor's sight the motherland was 'awakening'. That was the word he used, *vide* the extract I made above.

Vivekananda had, however, visioned India as already 'awakened'. This robust pride in our genius and even robuster faith in our future constituted one of the secrets of the seer's power to push and even to pull us forward on the path of regeneration.

In minting the title, the Master had also in view another purpose. He wished to associate the Buddha with the enterprise. In so doing he was to stress the fact that cultural unity underlay diversity in India.

The Swami had not been content with furnishing the inspiration for launching *Prabuddha Bharata*. No. He did much more. He clearly indicated the way in which it was to be conducted for the dual purposes of awakening India and raying India's message to humanity at large.

Succinctly stated, it was to be a *magazine* not a review. Like his address at the Parliament of Religions, it was to capture interest and, through that captured interest, instruct. The appeal was to be to the heart and not merely to the head.

It took me years of journalistic experience in the wide, wide world to detect the diversity of approach to the mind of the reader of a magazine as compared with that of a review. It took me more years to acquire something of the technique necessary to achieve the two purposes.

To Vivekananda, who had perhaps never darkened the door-step of a newspaper office

at that time, all this must, however, have been perfectly plain. He, for instance, exhorted the editor to re-write and to popularize 'those wonderful stories scattered through the Sanskrit literature'. As Rajam put it :

. . . these stories are not like the unhealthy (? erotic), sensational (? sensual), fifth-rate French novels of the day, the cobwebs spun by idle brains, but the natural flowers of great minds that could, from a Himalaya-like philosophic altitude, take a sweeping and sympathetic survey of the human race. That is why they bear the stamp of immortality on them.

The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* had been, he suggested, for centuries in the making. Centuries will have to elapse before 'another of their kind can be made. They are not older than the mountains, but they will live longer than the mountains, and have more influence.'

Rajam went on to explain that the stories to be found in India's sacred books 'have a different meaning for every stage of human growth'. The ordinary man can enjoy them. So also can the philosopher. Each understands them, however, in his own way. The reason was easily comprehended. These stories were composed by men high up on the ladder of human progress. Some of them had, indeed, climbed to the topmost rung.

The Master had bade Rajam to :

. . . avoid all attempts to make the journal scholarly; it will slowly make its way all over the world, I am sure. Use the simplest language possible and you will succeed. The main feature should be the teaching of principles through stories. Do not make it metaphysical at all. . . . Go on bravely. Do not expect success in a day or two or a year. Always hold on to the highest. Be steady. . . . Be obedient and eternally faithful to the cause of truth, humanity and your country and you will move the world. Remember it is the person--the life which is the secret of power, nothing else.

The editor assured the reader that the Swami had 'undertaken to contribute to the journal as often as he' could.

He also avowed his intention to print 'articles on human subjects' by other authors. Without being 'heavy', they were to serve seekers after truth as lamps to light up the way of life.

Rajam admitted that Truth had many facets. At core, however, it was one. Had not the Lord Krishna said in the Song

<sup>1</sup> The *Prabuddha Bharata* or AWAKENED INDIA, Madras, July 1896, p. 2.

Celestial—the Bhagavad Gita—"I am in all religions, as the string in a pearl garland"?

The Vedanta that the Swami taught was the essence common to all religions—it was, in fact, the inner unity. So the *Prabuddha Bharata*, though a Hindu organ, had no quarrel with any religion.

"The ideal society, according to the Vedanta is", Rajam stated, simply and directly not the outcome of "...a millennium upon earth. Nor does it usher in a reign of angels, where there will be nothing but thorough equality of man, and peace and joy".

The Vedanta does not, on the contrary, indulge in any chimeras. 'Religious toleration, nay, neighbourly charity, and kindness even to animals constitute, indeed, its distinguishing characteristics. The fleeting concerns of life are subordinated to the eternal'. Man 'strives not to externalize, but to internalize himself more and more, and the whole social organism moves, as it were, with a sure instinct towards God'.

The ideal, the editor promised, 'will be steadily presented in these pages'. No attempt will, however, be made 'to restore old institutions which have had their day, any more than to restore to life a dead tree'. His object would be 'to present the ideal, which, fortunately, never gets too old, leaving every one to seek his own path of realization'.

An address delivered by the Swami to a band of earnest-minded Americans, reproduced in the inaugural issue, gave even a surer indication of the objective. 'As a boy I had some white mice,' confided the Master to his pupils.

... They were kept in a little box and had little wheels made for them, and when the mice tried to cross the wheels, the wheels turned and turned and the mice never got anywhere.

So with the world and our helping it. The only (purpose that the giving of) help (serves) is that you (the giver) get exercise.

This world is neither good nor evil; each man manufactures a world for himself. If a blind man begins to think of it, it is either soft or hard, or cold or hot. We are a mass of happiness or misery; we have seen that, hundreds of times, in our lives. As a rule, the young are optimistic and the old pessimistic. The young have all life before them; and the old are complaining—their day is gone; hundreds of usires, which they cannot fulfil, are struggling in their brain. Life

is at an end for them. Both are foolish. This life is neither good nor evil. It is according to the different states of mind in which we look at the world.

Fire, by itself, is neither good nor evil. When it keeps us warm, we say, 'How beautiful is the fire!' When it burns our fingers, we blame the fire. Still it was neither good nor bad. We use it, it produces in us the feeling of good or bad. . . So also is this world. It is perfect. By perfection is meant that it is perfectly fitted to meet its ends. We can all be perfectly sure that it will go on, and need not bother our heads wanting to help it.

Yet we must do good; it is the highest motive power we have, knowing all the time that it is a privilege to help. Do not stand on a pedestal and take five cents and say, 'Here, my poor man'. But be grateful that the poor man is there, so that by giving to him you are able to help yourself. It is not the receiver that is blessed but the giver. Be thankful that you are allowed to use your power of benevolence and mercy in the world and thus become pure and perfect. All good acts tend to make us pure and perfect.'

\* \* \*

I can make space for just one piece to serve as an instance of how the disciple followed in the Master's wake. Writing under the pseudonym of 'P. V. Ramaswami Raju, Barrister at Law', he related this tale, heavily condensed by me and consequently a part of it is in my phraseology.

From the feet of Father Himalaya, beloved through Time and Eternity of sages, the land rolled down in gradients so gentle as to be almost imperceptible. The Videhas, who peopled it in the age that we call Golden, had for their Lord, Janaka—one of a long line of Janakas. In the sciences and arts appertaining to the defence of the state from aggression and the maintenance of external order, this particular Janaka was versed as no contemporary of his was. He had acquired an insight into human nature and also into the eternal verities, that *rishis* and pundits visited the capital of Mithila (believed to be Janakpura of our day)—just for the joy of striking their minds against his. He was, in consequence, known as the *rajarshi*—Kingly Sage.

One day a seeker after truth came thither. His brain was well-nigh bursting with curiosity as to how Janaka managed, 'in the midst of the cares of state', to maintain relationships with his people and his kin on a level that was held as ideal; and yet had acquired

<sup>1</sup> *ibid.* pp. 8-9.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* pp. 8-9.

the competency to reveal the *paramatman* —the soul of souls. Exercising the student's privilege, he frankly asked the *rajarshi* the secret of his success, unparalleled in the annals of man.

'O Sage!' admitted Janaka, '... your questions are most pertinent. The ways of this world and the ways of the holy are often different. But there are instances in which the two go together. It is extremely difficult to explain satisfactorily by means of words how this happens. But it is easy to indicate the same by a practical illustration. I request you will be so good as to submit to a tangible demonstration. It is not my object to insult you by it, but only to show you effectually what I mean.'

\* \* \* \* \*

Upon the student agreeing to submit to the experiment in Truth, his head was shaved clean. He was given a piece of cloth to tie round his loins.

... on his head was placed a wide plate with a very low brim, containing quicksilver. Four tall soldiers of martial frame with drawn swords attended him on four sides. The instructions of the king to these four men were these:

'Take the sage round the city. Let there be music and dancing at every stage. Let everything else that would charm the senses be placed in his way so as to attract his attention.'

\* \* \* \* \*

Not a particle of the quicksilver must, however, fall from the plate, the king adjured. If any did, the guards must instantly cut off his head.

At the sound of these words the student's heart quailed. All his attention was immediately concentrated upon the plate. He went round the whole city. The journey began in the morning and ended in the evening.

When finally the soldiers brought the student back to the king he was asked to put the plate down. He did so and sat exhausted upon the sward, near a fountain from which 'the lily welcomed the moonbeams as they glanced through the foliage of the woodlands around'.

Now the king asked the stranger to tell him all 'that he had seen in the city'.

'Sire,' he replied, 'I can tell you nothing... because... I saw nothing. My mind was wholly occupied with the plate of quicksilver.'

The king replied: '... Just so; the best music in the city was got up for you... Theatricals were to be seen at every turn in the streets. Fair women, like the lotus and the jessamine, smiled in your course. Elephants with gorgeous trappings followed you: horses caparisoned with cloth of silver and gold preceded you. Perfumes, the most agreeable and costly, were burnt all round in censers of gold bedecked with priceless gems. But you noticed nothing, as your mind was... concentrated upon the plate.'

'Similarly,' the king admitted, 'I live in the midst of the cares of a kingdom surrounded by all the splendour and magnificence attendant upon it. I notice, however, nothing about them or about those that delight in them because my mind is with the *paramatman*.'

\* \* \* \* \*

Some twenty-five months after this good work had begun, Yamaraja's messengers relieved Rajam of all striving in this mundane sphere. 'The *nishtha* or contemplation by which he realized the *atman* was', wrote 'P.S' in an obituary note, 'none of the common breath-stopping or tip-of-the-nose-watching kind'. No. 'A natural and peaceful death' ended 'a glorious and happy life'.<sup>4</sup>

The last issue of the second volume contained a notice:

... it is our most painful duty to bring the journal to a close, in spite of the sore disappointment which we are aware this message will cause to our many subscribers, to whom we take this opportunity of bidding a sad farewell.<sup>5</sup>

The writer of that notice must have been a man of little faith. The battery, it is true, had worn out. The great soul that had charged it, however, remained. Soon another dynamo was put into service. Of this we shall learn in the section that follows.

(To be continued)

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.* June 1898, p. 134.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.* p. 135.

## MOTHER

BY P. SAMA RAO

When in the lap of God,  
Peace and goodwill  
Charmingly lie,  
Prattling mayhap  
Of Spring and stars,  
Of dolls and Dawn,  
Of birds and song,  
Of babbling streams,  
And 'merald glints  
In luscious Nature's stalls, . . .  
There upbrews a terrible storm,  
Of deathly grin and stifling smoke,  
Of ghostly pallor and crimson ire,  
With the mad rush

Of elemental flame.  
The Mother like a lightning potent,  
Garlanded with the ravished lotuses blue,  
With tresses upblown, and shimmering  
Like the electric waves—  
With face beaming a beatific vision—  
Raises the babe up to her breasts . . .  
With a mystic-syllabled lullaby  
Formed of Her supernal breath,  
And telling a tale of life in death,  
Croons She softly, . . .  
Caresses it fondly  
To its eternal rest.

## EDUCATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION IN INDIA

BY DR. DEBENDRA CHANDRA DAS GUPTA, M.A., ED.D.

A radical reconstruction or a total change in the system of education in India is a supreme necessity. It is demanded by the spirit of the times, the changing environment and circumstances and above all by the dire economic situation created by the war which will by no means end with its termination and the Allied victory which is evidently in sight. The system that is, is inherently defective : it is utterly divorced from reality, totally unsound in its psychological conception and it is at war with reason and truth. Many keen-sighted observers, both Indian and European —among the Europeans is to be noted the honoured name of the Marquis of Zetland— have noted the basic absurdities of the system of education in India. It is alien in spirit, perverted in method; it is infected with a spirit of abnormalities from top to bottom. The necessity of employing a foreign tongue for imparting higher education, the choice of topics, which are not psychologically rooted in the mind, these and things like these are among the evils which have been repeatedly pointed out.

An enquiry into a thorough-going reconstruction of the educational system of India is bound to lead us into the detailed discussion of topics like these for which we have no space at our disposal in the present article, the object of which is to offer in a tentative manner an ideal scheme of education in outline, the adoption of which is calculated to remove some of the glaring defects under which our present educational system suffers.

We propose to discuss the entire educational system in its primary, secondary, collegiate, and university phases. At the very outset, it will not be amiss to mention that several schemes of ideal reconstruction in the field of education have been offered, the most notable of which is the Wardha system. It is not without serious defects. It does not aim at producing boys and girls with their mind fully developed but aims at training experts in the mechanical concern of life. It looks upon the young children as adults in miniature and thrusts upon them a scheme of vocational education at an early stage in life when they will receive proper education for the

fullest development of their sense and motor activities.

Let us begin our ideal scheme with a reference to a pre-school training prevalent in ancient India resembling in spirit the modern nursery and kindergarten schools. These two types of schools should be a unique feature in our school system.

The present practice of completing the elementary education in four years should be replaced by a term of six years followed by a four year regular high school. The four year primary school training is not at all adequate for academic and vocational training. Over and above, the longer period will give the infants who are not fortunate enough to go up for next higher course in education enough to embrace successfully different occupations enabling them to earn their bread. This is a very practical aspect of the problem of which we should by no means lose sight. The elementary education of four years should be followed, in case of students bent on learning technical arts, by an altogether separate course of three years devoted to instruction, theoretical and practical in the arts and crafts. Four year high school should be superimposed upon the six year elementary school so as to facilitate the transfer of more intelligent pupils to the secondary school after their graduation from the elementary schools.

The primary school curriculum like the art curriculum in ancient India, should be both practical and theoretical and it should include the Three R's, vernacular language, history, geography, mathematics, social science, natural science, fine arts, physical education and other courses of studies according to the needs of locality.

Special care should be taken to distribute the primary schools in answer to the needs of the locality. Unnecessary multiplication of similar institutions should by no means be permitted by the local authority. There should be a department of primary education under the direct control of the local Government to stimulate the spread of primary education among the mass. Primary education should be made both compulsory and free as in all other civilized countries of the world. Adequate provision should be made for the supervision of primary education by appointing a well paid hierarchy of officials for the purpose. The accommodation of these educational in-

stitutions should be adequate and they should be within the easy reach of young scholars.

The primary school teachers should receive proper training and their payment should be made from the treasury of the state.

The secondary schools should be consolidated. Like the primary education, the secondary education should be the concern of the state. All the institutions imparting secondary education should be financed and controlled by the state. We know that exactly the reverse of this process prevails in the country with disastrous results. The curricula in the secondary schools should include college preparatory courses, agriculture, commerce, industry, home economics, technology and other useful courses according to the needs of the scholars and of the locality. The secondary schools should maintain a much higher standard admitting students of superior mental calibre capable of making the best use of the training received in the secondary schools.

The Indian universities should inaugurate two distinct types of examinations—one college preparatory course qualifying the students for admission to colleges and the other vocational course ensuring their fitness for entrance into higher technical or vocational colleges. Thus secondary schools should prepare the scholars for colleges and for life's career. According to the present arrangement the secondary schools prepare the students only for the university examinations and not for vocations. The teachers in the secondary schools should be professionally trained and they must be adequately paid. Under the present system teachers in the private schools are very inadequately paid with the result that really first-class men are not available for the educational profession. And people of inferior mental calibre manage the whole of our secondary education, and it may be mentioned in this connection that in the civilized countries of the West, e.g. England and the U.S.A., the school teachers are invariably brilliant intellectuals who are well paid and who do full justice to their choice. There is no earthly reason why this healthy ideal should not be followed in this country. As for the financial aspect of the problem it may be suggested that the expenses in other departments should be curtailed in the interests of education which should be the

dominant concern of all progressive communities.

It is exceedingly happy to note that the system of our higher education imparted through colleges has undergone remarkable changes from time to time, thanks to educational reformers—English and Indian. The name of Lord Curzon is to be especially mentioned in this connection because it was he who emphasized the need of the spread of culture in India, the preservation of India's ancient heritage and the methodization of training in modern science and arts. He advocated the bifurcation of the arts and science courses, thorough overhauling of Indian universities on a residential system. He instituted new types of Degrees in Science, Arts, and Medicine. Subsequent Commissions recommended salutary reforms of our entire educational system. The Sargent Commission has given us a detailed scheme of educational programme for the post-war period. In our opinion pre-professional courses covering two to three years, as the case may be, for various professions such as engineering, medicine, dentistry, and other branches of human knowledge should be instituted in our undergraduate courses. Students pursuing the respective pre-professional curriculum should be guided by specialists who will guide the students failing to make satisfactory progress in their studies. These specialists should prescribe for the students a course of study for which they are really fit by their natural endowment. This means the avoidance of the wastage of human energy and money. Though students under the present system of our education are allowed the freedom of choice in the matter of the subjects of their studies, in concrete practice this privilege is denied to them.

The advocacy of university reforms of Lord Curzon was carried into practice in Bengal by Sir Asutosh. He was chiefly instrumental in opening post-graduate classes and it is he who provided facilities for independent and original researches. He invited eminent scholars to take charge of the various departments in the university. The patriotic efforts of Sir Asutosh in this connection may fitly be compared to the laudable patriotic zeal of the German philosopher and educationist Fichte. The post-war reconstruction following the first world war witnessed the movement in the

direction of the establishment of a good many residential universities in important cities of India.

Our Indian universities need further expansion of curricular changes and the establishment of new departments of studies in agriculture, technology, sociology, journalism, fine arts, etc. The university courses stand in need of reorganization on an improved scale and the university standards in teaching should be raised on a par with those maintained in the renowned universities of Europe and U.S.A.

The academic year in our Indian universities should be split up into two sessions or semesters divided into two equal halves, each session being closed with a final university examination.

There should be advisers in the various departments in the universities whose function it would be to help the scholars in making intelligent selection of their courses. Instead of fixing stereotyped courses for a degree requirement in each department, the scholars should enjoy full freedom to select courses from various departments to make their own programme of studies leading to degrees. To facilitate the spread of higher education among the people working in the day-time, it is desirable to open university and college classes from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. with recess for lunch and supper. This practice is followed in America to the great benefit of the people and with excellent results. This practice will enable the scholars to earn their bread and at the same time to improve their mind. To carry this project into practice many sections of the same course should be offered at different periods of the working hour in the university.

Extension courses in different branches of knowledge leading to the degree course should be instituted in the Indian universities. Vacation courses may also be offered in the universities for the diffusion of knowledge among the citizens.

Some of the Indian universities maintain employment bureau under a secretary to place unemployed educated youths in occupations. This bureau should be thoroughly overhauled under a competent director of vocational guidance, well-versed in educational courses, such as vocational education, vocational guidance, vocational surveys,

vocational psychology, statistics, sociology, commerce, etc. He should be assisted by specialists in tests and measurements who will administer intelligent tests and special aptitude tests to candidates to discover their 'G' and 'S' factors before they are placed in industry and in other occupations. The placement officer will be assisted by a co-ordinator whose function it would be to follow the candidates in their work and to report to the placement officer of their progress in work. The officers of the Vocational Guidance Bureau will prepare occupational charts showing the proper correlation between the levels of native and specific intelligence and success in various occupations and professions. This body will also make periodical vocational and educational surveys in co-operation with other agencies in the local community to inform the university about the changes in society and corresponding needs in educational programme. This will undoubtedly eliminate the wastage of human energy and money, which is a vital thing especially in the era of economic distress. There shall be a substantial improvement in the scale of pay received by the teachers of the private colleges as well as those of the university. These people constitute a motley fraternity whose lot is more pathetic than could be described adequately in words. The practice of appointing part-time lecturers should be altogether discontinued. Education is a serious thing and the workers in it must be whole-time workers identifying themselves with their task efficiently and thoroughly. Eminent professors should be exchanged not only with the different Indian universities but also with the foreign universities to import fresh ideas and thought.

There is a remarkable absence of the amenities of social life in all our educational institutions. The clubs and associations that exist are not warmly patronized by the parties concerned. Steps should be taken by the institutions to foster the spirit of social grace, exchange of courtesy and communication of ideas in an atmosphere of freedom of thought between students and students and between students and teachers alike. It is regrettable that the factors of moral discipline, which has been the soul of Indian culture in all its phases, are so sadly lacking among the recipients of higher education today. In this respect

modern India can immensely benefit by the examples of the Jains and the Buddhists who appointed *niryapakas* and *karmadanas* for supervision of morals of the pupils. We, too, should have modern *niryapakas* supervising the morals of our young men—*niryapakas* well equipped for their task by their character, training and dignified position in life due to their culture. It is desirable that the students should be trained through group and social activities to develop civic virtues as a preparation for their citizenship. A course in Indianization should be offered in our high schools, colleges and universities as a means to solve communal dissension.

Co-education, though an unavoidable necessity should be avoided if possible on psychological grounds. It may be noted that even in the United States of America where co-education is universally allowed in all the state controlled institutions, there is a group of parents or guardians who do not favour co-education beyond high school, and special colleges for girls are organized in some of the progressive States of the Union. We suggest the opening of post-graduate classes in government colleges for girls. A separate university for girls in the major provinces of India will be a pleasant feature in the history of our post-war reconstruction. Appointments in such post-graduate departments and universities should all be made from among the female candidates.

Under the present system of education per capita cost of educating pupils is not uniform. This is due to the existence of private institutions and to the variability of financial resources of the local communities. This variability exists even among the government colleges, some localities enjoy the benefit of having an excellent institution for their children and some poor and backward communities cannot support even an ill-equipped institution. This variability in per capita costs exists not only among the students of the same sex but also among the pupils of the fair sex. Per capita cost for girls is much higher than the per capita cost for boys. In a word the wealth of the state is not equitably spent to educate its children. Sound scheme of equalizing the state funds in the education of a child should be devised by the authorities of the education department

and special funds should be set apart in enabling the backward communities to maintain at least a minimum standard of education for their children. Finally, increased grants should be made to educational institutions and various devices should be planned by the finance specialists in raising funds for the support of education.

We have pointed out some of the glaring defects of the system of education prevalent in India and we have offered a brief scheme of our own. In a few words our educational

authorities should make it a point to effect a harmonious co-ordination between the primary and the secondary systems of education. They should elevate the occupation of teaching by making it remunerative and attractive. They should introduce the feature of moral discipline in the educational system in the spirit of our ancient ancestors. If the simple but nevertheless very radical ideas—ideas that are difficult for realization—be carried out, our educational system will be as perfect as it might be expected to be under the present conditions.

## IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER

By P. S. CHITALE

The word 'prayer' comes from the Latin 'precarī' which means to ask. Whenever, therefore, we pray to God we ask for something. Well, what should that something be? Every human being is endowed with 'conscience' which means the power of deciding what is right and what is wrong. We are, therefore, expected to do the one and avoid the other, and in order to see how far we are able to discharge this, our foremost duty as human beings, it is necessary that we should daily examine our conduct and take stock of the various thoughts entertained by us in our mind and the various acts done by us during the day. This self-examination may reveal to us that there were occasions on which we had entertained evil thoughts, or said or done wrong things. Nay, we may also realize that in spite of our sincere desire for self-improvement, we find ourselves to be quite powerless to overcome the evil in us, and it is at this stage that realizing our utter helplessness, we instinctively come down on our knees and most humbly ask God to give us strength enough to conquer the evil in us; and as religion is only meant to enable people to achieve this conquest, prayer is the very essence of every religion.

We should, therefore, take to the practice of rising early in the morning with His name on our lips and invoking His aid to help us in our struggle during the day; and at

night time, before retiring, we should take stock of the day's failures and lapses, make a confession of them to our Maker and do a sincere penance for them. The only fitting penance for a lapse is to make a firm resolve not to allow it to happen again and to try to live up to what we resolve. Similarly when we pray for any virtue, we must also try to cultivate it. The form of our prayer should, therefore, be the rule of our life, i.e. we must look upon our prayer as an imperative necessity. In short, we must not unsay our prayers in our conduct. So also although we may kneel down for praying, we must not leave off praying when we rise up, except when otherwise employed, for every good and holy desire, though it lack the form, hath in itself the substance and force of a prayer to God. And whatever be the attitude of our body, the soul should be always on its knees.

We must not waste our time in foolish merry-making, but devote all the time we can spare from labour and rest to devout prayer.

Prayer, however, does not mean merely recitation with the lips; it should be a yearning from within, as otherwise 'your words may fly up, but your thoughts would remain below; while words without thoughts can never to Heaven go'. In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart, for God hears no more

than the heart speaks, and if the heart be dumb God will certainly be deaf.

Since a heart-felt prayer is the only potent instrument that man possesses for achieving victory in his struggle for self-improvement, it is as indispensable for the soul as food is for the body.

Success, however, does not attend the very first effort at such a living prayer. We have to strive against ourselves, we have to believe

in spite of ourselves. We have to cultivate illimitable patience if we will realize the efficacy of prayer. There will be darkness, disappointment, and even worse; but we must have courage enough to battle against all these, there being no such thing as retreat for a man of prayer.

If we continue this practice of praying, we shall thereby build, as it were, a solid wall of protection round ourselves, and our faults will gradually abate of themselves.

## ADAMANT

By NICHOLAS ROERICH

To the sacred ideals of nations in our days the watch-words: 'Art and Knowledge', have been added with special imperativeness. It is just now that something must be said of the particular significance of these great conceptions both for the present time and for the future. I address these words to those whose eyes and ears are not yet filled with the rubbish of everyday life, to those whose hearts have not yet been stopped by the lever of the machine called 'Mechanical civilization'.

Art and Knowledge! Beauty and Wisdom! Of the eternal and still renewed meaning of these conceptions it is not necessary to speak. When but starting on the path of life, every child already instinctively understands the value of decoration and knowledge. Only later, under the grimace of disfigured life this light of the spirit becomes darkened, while in the kingdom of vulgarity it has no place and is unknown. Yes, the spirit of the age attains even to such monstrosity!

It is not the first time that I have knocked at these gates and I here again appeal to you.

Amongst horrors, in the midst of the struggles and the collisions of the people the question of knowledge and the question of art are matters of the first importance. Do not be astonished. This is not exaggeration, neither is it a platitude. It is a decided affirmation, the only road to Peace.

The question of relativity of human knowledge has always been much argued. But

now, when the whole of mankind has felt directly or indirectly the horrors of war, this question has become a vital one. People have not only become accustomed to think, but even to speak without shame about things of which they evidently have not the slightest knowledge. On every hand men repeat opinions which are altogether unfounded. And such judgements bring great harm into the world, an irreparable harm.

We must admit that during the last few years European culture has been shaken to its very foundation. In the pursuit of things, the achievement of which has not yet been destined to mankind, the fundamental steps of ascent have been destroyed. Humanity has tried to lay hold on treasures which it has not deserved and so has rent the benevolent veil of the goddess of happiness.

Of course, what mankind has not yet attained it is destined to attain in due time, but how much man will have to suffer to atone for the destruction of the forbidden gates! With what labour and self-denial shall we have to build up the new bases of culture!

The knowledge which is locked up in libraries or in the brains of the teachers again penetrates but little into contemporary life. Again it fails to give birth to active work.

Modern life is filled with the animal demands of the body. We come near to the line of the terrible magic circle. And the only way of conjuring its dark guardians and escaping from it is through the talisman of true knowledge and beauty.

The time when this will be a necessity is at hand.

Without any false shame, without the contortions of savages, let us confess that we have come very near to barbarism. For confession is already a step towards progress.

It matters not that we still wear European clothes and, following our habit pronounce special words. But the clothes cover savage impulses and the meaning of the words pronounced, although they are often great, touching, and uniting, is now obscured. The guidance of knowledge is lost. People have become accustomed to darkness.

More knowledge! More art! There are not enough of these bases in life, which alone can lead us to the golden age of unity.

The more we know, the more clearly we see our ignorance. But if we know nothing at all, then we cannot even know we are ignorant. And that being so, we have no means of advancement and nothing to strive for. And the dark reign of vulgarity is inevitable. The young generations are not prepared to look boldly, with a bright smile, on the blinding radiance of knowledge and beauty. Whence then is the knowledge of the reality of the things to come? Whence then are wise mutual relations to arise? Whence is unity to come, that unity, which is the true guarantee of steady forward movement? Only on the base of true beauty and of true knowledge can a sincere understanding between the nations be achieved. And the real guide would be the universal language of knowledge and of the beauty of art. Only these guides can establish that kindly outlook which is so necessary for future creative work.

The path of animosity, roughness, and abuse will lead us nowhere. Along that way nothing can be built. Does not a conscience still remain in human nature? The real being in man still seeks to attain justice.

Away with darkness, let us do away with malice and treachery. Mankind has already felt enough of the hand of darkness.

Let me tell you, and mind you, these are not platitudes, not mere words, I give voice to the convinced seeking of the worker: the only bases of life are art and knowledge.

It is just in these hard days of labour, in this time of suffering, that we must steadily recall these kindly guides. And in our hours

of trial let us confess them with all the power of our spirit.

You say: 'Life is hard. How can we think of knowledge and beauty if we have nothing to live on?' "or" We are far away from knowledge and art; we have important business to attend to first'.

But I say: You are right, but you are also wrong. Knowledge and art are not luxuries. Knowledge and art are not idleness. It is time to remember this: They are prayer and the work of the spirit. Do you really think that people pray only when over-fed or after excessive drinking? Or during the time of careless idleness?

No, men pray in the moments of great difficulty. So too, is this prayer of the spirit most needful, when one's whole being is shaken and in want of support, and when it seeks for a wise solution. And wherein lies the stronger support? What will make the spirit shine more brightly?

We do not feel hunger or starvation; we do not shiver because of the cold. We tremble because of the vacillation of our spirit; because of distrust, because of unfounded expectations.

Let us remember how often, when working, we have forgotten about food, have left unnoticed the wind, the cold, the heat. Our intent spirit wrapped us in an impenetrable veil.

"The weapon divideth it not, the fire burneth it not, the water corrupteth it not, the wind drieth it not away; for it is indivisible, inconsumable, incorruptible and is not to be dried away; it is eternal, universal, permanent, immovable. . . . Some regard the indwelling spirit as a wonder, whilst some speak and others hear of it with astonishment; but no one realizes it, although he may have heard it described.'—Gita, Ch. II.

Of what does the great wisdom of all ages and all nations speak? It speaks of human spirit. Penetrate in thought into the deep significance of these words and into the meaning of your life. You know not the limits to the power of the spirit. You do not know over what impassable obstacles your spirit bears you, but some day you shall awake, unharmed and everlastingly regenerated. And when life is hard and weary, and there seems to be no way out, do you not feel that some helper, your own divine spirit, is

speeding to your aid? But his path is long and your faint-heartedness is swift. Yet does the helper come, bringing you both the 'sword of courage' and the 'smile of daring'. We have heard of a family which in despair put an end to their lives with fumes of charcoal. Now this was intolerably faint-hearted. When the coming victory of the spirit arrives, will not they who have fled without orders, suffer fearfully because they did not apply their labour to that to which they should have applied it? It matters not what labour. The drowning man fights against the flood by all possible means. And if his spirit is strong, then the strength of his body will increase without measure.

But by what means will you call forth your spirit? By what means will you lay bare that which in man is buried under the fragments of his everyday life? Again and again I repeat: by the beauty of art, by the depth of knowledge. In them and in them alone are contained the victorious conjurations of the spirit. And the purified spirit will show you what knowledge is true, what art is real. I am assured that you will be able to call your spirit to your aid. That spirit, your guide, will show you the best paths. It will lead you to joy and victory. But even to victory it will lead you by a lofty path, whose steps are bound together by knowledge and beauty alone. . . . An arduous trial awaits the whole world: the trial by assimilation of truth. After the medieval trials by fire, water, and iron, now comes the trial by assimilation of truth. But if the power of the spirit upheld men against fire and iron, then will that same power raise them also up the steps of knowledge and beauty. But this test is more severe than the trials of antiquity. Prepare to achieve! Prepare for that achievement which is a matter of daily life. Meanwhile have care for everything that serves to advance the perception of truth. Approach with special gratitude all that shows forth the stages of beauty. At this time all this is especially difficult.

But adamant-like stands Beauty, and Culture—the only road to Peace.

Our motto is: Humanity is facing the coming events of cosmic greatness. Humanity already realizes that all occurrences are not accidental. The time for the construction of future Culture is at hand. Before our eyes

the revolution of values is being witnessed. Amidst ruins of valueless banknotes, mankind has found the real value of the world's significance. The values of great art are victoriously traversing all storms of earthly commotions. Even the 'earthly' people already understand the vital importance of active beauty. And when we proclaim Love, beauty and action, we know verily, that we pronounce the formula of the international language. And this formula, which now belongs to the Museum and stage must enter everyday life. The sign of Beauty of will opens all sacred gates. Beneath the sign of Beauty we walk joyfully. With Beauty we conquer. Through Beauty we pray. In Beauty we are united. And now we affirm these words: 'Not on the snowy heights, but amidst the turmoil of the city. And realizing the path of true reality, we greet with a happy smile the future.'

During the days of the present Armageddon I have been asked to send my message to several art exhibitions in India. My message was: Art should be protected by all means. Armageddon is roaring. Art and knowledge are the corner-stones of evolution. Art and science are needed always, but in our Armageddonial days they must be especially guarded by all powers of our hearts. It is a great mistake to think that during troubled times culture can be disregarded. On the contrary the need of culture is especially felt in times of war and human misunderstandings. Outside of Art, Religion is inaccessible, Outside of Art the spirit of Nationality is lost, Outside of Art, Science is dark. This is not an utopia. The History of Humanity gives innumerable examples of Art being the great Beacon Light in times of calamity. Scientists assert that colour and sound are a panacea. By Beauty and Harmony even wild beasts were tamed. Let the sacred flute of Sri Krishna resound again! Let us visualize that peace in which the majestic frescoes of Ajanta were created! In times of war let us think of future peace, affirmed by creativeness, labour and beauty. Travelling through India we passed along a road in the shadow of mighty chinars. Our guide told us: 'The great emperor Akbar thought of the future travellers who will be sheltered by these beautiful trees. He looked into the future'. 'To regard the Beautiful means to

improve'—said Plato. 'Man becomes that of which he thinks'—preordained the *upanishads*.

'A renaissance of art is the evidence of the renaissance of a nation. In a declining country, art becomes only an abstract luxury. But when a country is in its full prowess, art becomes the real motive power of its people. Let us imagine the history of humanity without the treasure of beauty. We will then readily realize that the epochs are felt meaningless, denuded of their soul. Without a manifestation of the spirit of the Beautiful, we shall remain amid the ugliness of death. And when we proclaim that beauty, art, is life, we speak about the coming evolution of beauty. Everything accomplished for art is an attainment for evolution. Every co-worker in this field is already a hero.'

'It is great praise to this country that the roll of its creative workers cannot be expressed in one list but merits an entire great series,

even with the briefest appreciations. We are happy to feel what a vast material is before us and what a joy it is to show to the young generation the brilliant legion which has constructed the most beautiful achievements. Wherever art and knowledge flourish we may be enthusiasts. And in this joyful enthusiasm we may greet the true creative forces of the nation. An exhibition is not only a monument to the creator, the worker, but it is the best avocation for the youth to come. I am happy to greet the brilliant artists, to hail the essence of beautiful creative thought and to salute the young generation to which this creative thought brings its coming happiness.'

O Bharata, all beautiful, let me send thee my heart-felt admiration for all the greatness and inspiration which fill thy ancient cities and temples, thy meadows, thy *deobans*, thy sacred rivers and the Himalayas !

## THIS IS HISTORY

BY PROF. SUDHANSU BIMAL MOKERJI, M.A.

It is said that when Napoleon required a volume of history, he would cry out, 'Bring me my liar.'

Sir Walter Raleigh, during his captivity in the Tower of London, once heard an uproar outside. He sent one of the guards to ascertain what the matter was. His report did not satisfy Sir Walter. Another man was sent. He gave an entirely different report. Several more were sent one after another and on the same errand. Sir Walter was treated to a new story by each. The reports of different eyewitnesses of the same incident thus varying from one another, the illustrious prisoner lost all faith in history and was about to consign to flames the manuscript of the 'History of the World' written by him. He was convinced that any attempt to ascertain historical truth was not a whit wiser than chasing the wild goose.

Evidence in plenty may be adduced to show that story sometimes passes for history. There is, of course, what is known as the scientific method of arriving at truth. Yet it cannot be gainsaid that purely personal sentiments, sympathies, and antipathies have lured

many a historian away from the path of truth. Fancy again counts many victims among the students of history, whose works can be hardly distinguished from fiction. Macaulay and Froude, for example, had no scruples to sacrifice truth on the altar of their pet theories. It must, however, be admitted that few, if any, of the modern historians do deliberately mix the alloy of fiction with the gold of historical truth. We propose to expose, in the following paragraphs, some widely prevalent historical myths—a few selected at random out of a whole galaxy.

What is the truth about the battle of Thermopylae? It has been handed down from generation to generation that the Spartan King Leonidas at the head of a valiant band, but 300 strong, opposed at Thermopylae the countless hordes of Xerxes of Persia. But we have it on the authority of Herodotus, 'the Father of History', that Leonidas had the Spartan, Thespian, and Theban contingents with him to the last. The strength of this combined army was well above a thousand, some 1,400, to be more accurate.

Much has been spoken of the Turkish brutality on the Greeks during the Greek War of Independence. What are the facts? The Greeks perpetrated inhuman cruelties on the Turks, who, in retaliation, massacred the Greeks of Chios. Historians like Lodge and Oscar Browning are silent so far as the conduct of the Greeks is concerned. They, however, make ample amends for this lapse by giving harrowing details of how the infidel Turks slew the Christian Greeks in cold blood. Allison Philip's is almost the only voice in defence of truth. What actually took place was that the Greek clergy, under the leadership of Bishop Patrus of Germanos, declared a crusade against the Turks. The Mohammedans of Morea, numbering 25,000, were attacked so suddenly that they found little time for defence preparations and the entire Mohammedan population of Morea was wiped out within six weeks. No quarter was given. After the capitulation of the Fort of Tripolitsa, 2,000 Mohammedans—men, women, and children—fell into the hands of the Greeks. They were all put to the sword.

To come nearer home. It is popularly believed that Bakhtyar Khilji, at the head of eighteen horsemen, wrested the sovereignty of Bengal from the imbecile hands of the craven king Lakshmana Sena, who made good his escape barefooted. Bengali poets and artists (Nabin Chandra Sen, D. L. Roy, and Nandalal Bose, for example) have given wide publicity to the alleged cowardice of Lakshmana Sena.

The only detailed account of the Muslim invasion of Bengal during the reign of Lakshmana Sena is given by *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* of Maulana Minhajuddin Abu-Umar-i-Usman. It is obvious from this account that Mohammed made a sudden raid upon Nadia where Lakshmana Sena was residing. The invader came by an unexpected route and by forced marches. Minhaj does nowhere say that Bengal was conquered by eighteen Mohammedan horsemen. The eighteen formed the vanguard, with the intrepid Bakhtyar himself at its head, of a far larger army which must have been in the city before the raid was over.

Is it worthy of credence that the officers of the Sena kingdom were ignorant of the movements of Bakhtyar even when he had crossed the frontiers, and that at a time when the government was apprehending an invasion? Is it wise to believe that they admitted into the

city a band of foreigners without asking a question? Minhaj would have us believe that Nadia capitulated without striking a blow and neither a general nor an army was left to defend it. This state of affairs presupposes an utter paralysis of the governmental machinery. Minhaj contradicts himself when he says that for nearly half a century after the raid the descendants of Lakshmana Sena continued to rule in Eastern Bengal.

What are the sources tapped by Minhaj? On his own admission, he gathered his information from 'trustworthy persons' and that after nearly half a century later than the raid. The mental calibre of the informants of Minhaj may be judged from the silly stories they told him about the birth of Lakshmana Sena and the astrological prediction about Muslim invasion of Nadia (cf. 'When the birth of Lakshmana Sena drew near, the astrologers observed that if this child were born then, he would never become king, but if born two hours later, he would rule for eighty years. The queen-mother having heard this commanded that she should be suspended with her head downwards, with her two legs bound together. At the auspicious hour she was taken down but died after giving birth to the child.'—*Tabaqat*, p. 555. Minhaj next proceeds to say how after Bakhtyar's fame had reached the ears of Lakshmana Sena and his subjects, following the former's conquest of Bihar, a number of astrologers, wise men, and counsellors of the king advised him to leave the country as according to the holy books the country would shortly fall into the hands of the Yavanas.)

The lack of historical knowledge of the 'trustworthy persons' of Minhaj is clear from their statement that Lakshmana Sena reigned for eighty years, which, on the face of it, is absurd. In the words of Dr. R. C. Mazumdar, 'More than 40 years had passed since the raid of Nadia and the establishment of the Muslim rule, and the story of the first Muslim conquest must have been embellished by popular imagination and fire-side tales of old soldiers who naturally distorted the accounts of the old campaigns in order to paint in glowing colours their own valour and heroism.' (*The History of Bengal*, Vol. I. p. 245.) The learned Doctor concludes:

'Considering the materials on which Minhaj had to rely, we can hardly blame him for his account, but cannot certainly accept it in all its details, specially when these are in conflict with the probable and commonsense view of things. That Nadia was the first conquest of Mohammed Bakhtiyar may be readily accepted as a fact, but the details of the campaign must be taken with a great deal of reserve.' (*ibid.* pp. 245-246.)

Even if the account of Minhaj be taken at its face value, it is hard to believe that Lakshmana Sena was a coward. Evidence available points to the contrary. According to Minhaj himself the old king decided to stay on in Nadia when his panicky subjects left it in fear of the impending Mohammedian invasion and on the pretext that the holy books said that Nadia would fall a prey to Muslim invaders. If he really fled away barefooted, it was only after the enemy had entered his palace. This same Lakshmana Sena, in his earlier years, had carried on military expeditions far away from the province of Bengal in all directions. He reaped laurels of victory on many a field in Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, and Assam, and led his victorious army as far as Benares and Allahabad. Since the days of Dharmapala and Devapala (eighth and ninth centuries A.D.), centuries earlier, no other king of Bengal had pursued such an aggressive policy, and so far as can be judged from existing evidence his policy was crowned with a fair measure of success. Minhaj himself admits that Lakshmana Sena was 'a very great Rac' (king).

Another classical example of historical myth is the current version of the Shivaji-Afzal Khan episode. Grant Duff and others would have us believe that Shivaji treacherously murdered Afzal Khan. They have accepted the version of Khafi Khan in total disregard of the testimony of the Marathi Bakhars. But Kinkaid, Sarkar, and others have proved irrefutably that though Shivaji went for the interview with the Khan, fully armed, it was defence in anticipation and that Shivaji's murder of the latter was a 'preventive murder'.

Khafi Khan's hatred for Shivaji is notorious. So intense was this that the Mogal historian invariably refers to him in such terms as 'that hell-dog', 'that hated infidel', and the like. As the Afghan general,

together with his entourage, had been done to death, Khafi Khan could have no report from eyewitnesses. Duff has summarily, and to our mind arbitrarily, rejected the version of the Hindu chroniclers without giving any reason for such rejection. These latter never suppressed the truth even in cases where Shivaji had recourse to treachery and questionable tactics. It passes our comprehension why this particular incident should be an exception to the general rule. The Marathi Bakhars,—Savasad Bakhar, Siva Digvijaya Bakhar, Chitnis Bakhar, Malkare Bakhar—are unanimous in their testimony that the Bijapuri general struck the first blow and Shivaji disembowelled him in self-defence.

That Afzal Khan meant treachery from the very beginning is evident from the contemporary English factory record—Rajapur Letter of 10 December 1659—which tells that Afzal Khan was instructed by his government to secure Shivaji by 'pretending friendship with him' as he could not be resisted by armed strength. But his plan leaked out and the astute Maratha made the intended treachery recoil on the Khan's head. It was, as Sarkar puts it, 'a case of diamond cut diamond'. This is corroborated by the Marathi chronicles on the point that Shivaji's intelligence department learnt from Afzal Khan's officers about the Khan's plan to arrest him by treachery at the proposed interview, and that Afzal Khan's envoy Krishnaji Bhaskar also divulged the secret of his master.

In the biography of Ramdas, written by his disciple Hanumant, Shivaji is represented as narrating the Afzal Khan episode in the following language: 'When, during our interview, Abdullah (i.e. Afzal Khan) gripped me in the throat, I lost consciousness. I could not have freed myself but for the blessings of the Swami.'

Had Afzal Khan been wounded at the beginning, he would not have sufficient strength left to make Shivaji unconscious. Would it be unreasonable to conclude that Afzal Khan attacked Shivaji before being wounded himself?

It may be asked quite pertinently—why did Shivaji put on defensive armour before going to the interview? The reply has been given by Sarkar, who says: 'Secret assassi-

nation is the favourite weapon of decadent monarchies, and many such murders had taken place in the Sultanates of the Deccan before this time. . . . Shivaji was fully convinced—and with good reason, as we know, —that Afzal Khan meant treachery. He would have been wanting in common prudence if he had not taken these precautions to save himself.' (*Shivaji*, pp. 72-73.)

Who built the 'Taj'? Tradition ascribes this 'dream in marble' to an Italian architect. This tradition is based on the statement of

Father Maurice. Havel, that great art-critic and authority on Indian art, on the other hand, is of opinion that this crystallized teardrop is the finest product of the synthesis of Indian and Persian styles of architecture. A similar difference of opinion divides scholars as to the architecture of the ruins of Ashoka's place at Kumarhar near Patna and of that of his Pillars. Dr. Spooner opines that these structures are permeated through and through by Persian influence. If this be true, an approach *de novo* has to be made to the history of India in bygone days.

## THE DRAFT HINDU CODE

*(The following statement on the Draft Hindu Code has been issued over the signatures of Hon'ble Mr. Justice R. C. Mitter, Hon'ble Mr. Justice B. K. Mukherjee, Hon'ble Mr. Justice C. C. Biswas, and Hon'ble Mr. Justice A. N. Sen.)*

We should be loth to add to the controversy which the Draft Hindu Code has already given rise to, but having regard to the importance of the subject, we as Hindus find it difficult to resist the request, which has been conveyed to us from several quarters, to express our views. We do not propose, however, to examine all the provisions of the Code, but shall touch upon some of the broader issues only, noticing, as regards details, just a few of the matters which appear to us to be of outstanding importance. A detailed discussion would have been more useful and appropriate with the members of the Rao Committee, if they had thought it fit to invite us to meet them during their last visit to Calcutta.

At the outset, we must express our serious doubts as to the wisdom, necessity, or feasibility of enacting a comprehensive Code of Hindu law. The Draft Code does not profess to be exhaustive, but it definitely aims at being a stage in the preparation of a complete Code, and that makes it necessary to consider how far such codification is proper or desirable.

Most of the rules of Hindu law are now well settled and well understood and a Code is not, therefore, called for at all. There is, in fact, no general demand for it; neither those who are affected by Hindu law, nor those who have to administer it have felt the necessity of a Code.

We are not aware that the whole of the personal law of any community in any country has been or been sought to be embodied in a Code, and it is our conviction that all communities in India, like the Moslems, for instance, will stoutly resist any attempt to foist a Code of personal law upon them. We see no reason why the Hindus should be treated differently.

As regards matters on which there may be divergences of opinion or conflicts of judicial decisions, legislative action may perhaps be called for or justified to remove doubts or obscurities, but it is quite a different proposition to try and effect fundamental changes in the structure of the law by means of legislation, when changes are not demanded by the community itself. For one thing, it is doubtful how far the legislature, particularly a legislature constituted as it is in this country, may be regarded as a fit instrument for carrying out such social reform.

We do not say that no changes are called for in Hindu law. Like every other system of law, Hindu law must be prepared to meet the challenge of the times. In fact it is the adaptability of Hindu law to changing conditions and circumstances that has helped to maintain it as a living force, and it is significant that the *Smritis*, which are the ultimate repository of the law, themselves recognize the principles of such growth and development.

Up to the advent of British rule, it was the Hindu jurists and commentators who helped forward the continuous evolution of the law, but this they did only by a judicious selection and exposition of the ancient texts without any attempt to undermine their basic authority. That process has since been arrested, and the only agencies which now exist for bringing about any changes are the courts of law and the legislature. So far as courts are concerned, their function in this respect is necessarily limited; all the same as every student of Hindu law knows the contribution which they have made to its development has indeed been very remarkable. The legislature, however, wields much wider powers, which extend not merely to the interpretation but to the making of the law, but it is precisely this circumstance which in our opinion casts upon it a special obligation to act with the utmost caution and circumspection.

The Rao Committee in their report have themselves indicated the conditions of legislative action in the field of Hindu law. 'Nor can we believe', they state, 'that the thoughtful reformer will wish to lay violent hands on the ancient structure of Hindu law except for proved necessity. It is a spacious structure, with many schools, and by a judicious selection and combination of the best elements in each, he should be able to evolve a system which, while retaining the distinctive character of Hindu law, will satisfy the needs of any progressive society.' But even in making such changes, as the Committee themselves recognize, 'the aim should be, so far as possible, to arrive at agreed solutions and to avoid doing anything likely to arouse acrimonious controversy'.

#### *Drop the Code*

According to their own tests, therefore, the Rao Committee ought to drop the proposed Code. Some of their proposals are little short of an attempt 'to lay violent hands on the structure of Hindu law', without any clear proof of necessity, and, as should be obvious to them by this time the 'aim' of arriving at 'agreed solutions' is beyond any hope of fulfilment.

One of the objects of the Committee is stated to be that of evolving a uniform code of Hindu law which will apply to all Hindus by 'blending the most progressive elements in

the various schools of law which prevail in different parts of the country'. It seems to us, however, that apart from anything else, as matters stand, uniformity is an impossible ideal. The Committee themselves recognized that all the topics of Hindu law do not come within the sphere of central legislation, and, in particular, that of devolution of agricultural land, which, by the Constitution Act, is exclusively a provincial subject. And it may be noted in this connexion that agricultural land constitutes by far the bulk of immoveable properties in Bengal, nay, in the whole of India; and, as has already been judicially held, the expression 'agricultural land' embraces within its scope a large variety of interests, from that of the proprietor of the highest grade to that of the actual tiller of the soil. The Committee hope that the provinces will move on the lines prescribed in the Code. We doubt, however, whether this hope will be realized. It is too much to expect that all the provinces would adopt all the provisions of the Central Act. It is highly improbable that the provinces, especially Bihar and U. P., would adopt Part III-A of the Code, relating to the abolition of survivorship, or Bengal would adopt S. 5 of Part II *en bloc*. Assuming, however, that this will happen, will the operation of the Code be held up till the last of the provinces has expressed its views? What would happen if the provinces finally legislated on different lines? Religious and Charitable Endowments, again, happen to be an exclusively provincial subject, and if 'Shebaitsip' is deemed to be a part of this subject, complicated questions are bound to arise regarding the devolution of such interest also.

But, after all, is uniformity such a desideratum that it must be purchased at any price? Diversities of usage are inevitable among the very large number of Hindus who inhabit this vast sub-continent, and it was not for nothing that the Hindu law-givers recognized the paramount authority of local usages and customs. Why, then, it may be asked, must the Hindus of any particular locality be necessarily called upon to forswear their own distinctive traits and traditions in the interests of a theoretical symmetry? And why, further, for the sake of attaining an ideal uniformity, must the law be cut off from its ancient moorings? Hindu law, divorced

from the *Smritis* and *Nibandhas*, would be a contradiction in terms.

We are definitely of opinion that any attempt to break down the various schools of law and merge them all in one uniform system is a move in the wrong direction. But this is not saying that there may not be elements in any existing school of law that do not call for a change. Nor would it be right to decry any proposal to introduce such specific changes by legislative action as 'piecemeal legislation', and to insist on comprehensive legislation as the only alternative. We think that there is a certain amount of unfounded prejudice against what is usually called 'piecemeal legislation'. Unlike other countries in Europe, legislation in England has always been piecemeal, and has led to no untoward results.

It is piecemeal, compared with the totality of the laws, but may be quite exhaustive so far as that particular topic or branch of law is concerned. In such partial legislation, however, care must be taken to see that it is not a misfit with the rest of the law, as was undoubtedly the case with Act 18 of 1937 (Hindu Women's Rights to Property Act).

#### *Some Omissions*

It is pertinent to ask in this connexion whether, apart from the legislative restrictions imposed by the classification of powers between the central and provincial legislatures under the Constitution Act, it is at all possible to draw up an exhaustive Code of the personal law of the Hindus, complete in all its branches, and providing for all possible contingencies. The Code as framed by the Rao Committee appears to us to be itself incomplete in regard to some of the matters which it professes to deal with as being within their sphere of competent legislation. Thus, for example, there are various important questions relating to joint family and partition, which have not been touched upon at all. By merely abolishing the rule of survivorship or the right by birth, you cannot abolish the Hindu joint-family law. Matters relating to management of joint family, to the *karta's* rights and privileges, to the mode of partition and the taking of accounts would still require consideration. Rights and liabilities in connection with joint-family business is another important topic of Hindu law, and

so also the important subject of 'self-acquisition', so fully dealt with by the commentaries and judicial decisions; but all these have been completely ignored in the Draft Code as it stands. When such questions come up before the courts, as they must, they would have to be dealt with under the existing rules of Hindu law, or rather, under the rules of the particular school of law which would be applicable. The Hindu Code would, therefore, neither be the sole repository of Hindu law, nor of a uniform body of law, as it is intended to be.

Holding, as we do, very definite views about the codification of Hindu law in general and the present Draft Code in particular, it would not serve much useful purpose to go into details, but we would only refer to some of the provisions of the Code. In the rules regarding inheritance, we recognize with satisfaction that the Committee have brought in many blood relations who are now excluded from the list of heirs, either because they belong to the female sex, or because they do not come within the scope of the *pinda* theory. We also find that the Committee have, in an admirable way, framed rules for precedence among non-enumerated heirs (Part II, Rules 8-9). These matters were not dealt with by the commentators, and might in our opinion fittingly form the subject of partial or auxiliary legislation like Act II of 1929, which set a useful precedent for such legislation by remedying certain defects in the Mitakshara law of inheritance.

#### *Two Things That cannot be Supported*

There are, at least, two matters in the chapter on inheritance in respect of which we find it difficult to support the Committee's proposals.

The first of these relates to the order of precedence among the enumerated heirs, by which the whole group of nine descendants specified in Class II is given priority over every one of the five heirs grouped under Class III. The first two of Class II, viz. son's daughter and daughter's daughter, might perhaps be allowed to come before the heirs described in Class III, and their rights so far as Mitakshara law is concerned have already been recognized by Act II of 1929; but, in our view, the same preference should not be given to the other seven relations mentioned in this group. All of them are, no

doubt, descendants of the propositus; but it can be safely asserted that no Hindu regards such relations as son's daughter's daughter, daughter's daughter's son, or daughter's daughter's daughter as nearer than, say, brother's grandson or sister's son—in fact they are regarded more or less as strangers who can have no place in the scheme of inheritance. It is obvious that between a man and his daughter's daughter's daughter, three families intervene. We cannot ignore the normal constitution of a Hindu family and give the descendants of a man precedence over ascendants or collaterals under all circumstances. It is to be noted that out of these nine relations, with the single exception of the son's daughter's son, the rest are not heirs at all under *Dayabhaga* law. The Benares school recognizes only 3, 6, and 8 as *bandhus* and it is only under the Bombay and Madras schools that all these relations are heirs, but then again they come after all the enumerated heirs are exhausted.

The other matter to which we should like to refer is the proposed inclusion of the daughter in the list of simultaneous heirs under Class I. This we consider to be a change of a revolutionary character, which, of all the proposals in the Code, has perhaps evoked the strongest and most widely expressed protest. The framers of the Code themselves do not appear to have been so very sure as to how far their proposal would react on the Hindu mind; and this perhaps dictated a cautious move on their part in providing for the daughter only a half of the share of a son, as under the Moslem law.

### *Serious Objection*

One serious objection to this provision is that it would lead to further fragmentation of the property; and the other is the traditional dislike in the Hindu mind of allowing strangers to the family to come and share the inheritance. Each of these, in our opinion, is a valid and well founded objection. The splitting up of estates due to plurality of heirs is an undoubted economic evil, and merely because the risk of such splitting up cannot be avoided, when there is a multiplicity of sons, it does not follow that the evil should be further aggravated by the introduction of a large number of simultaneous heirs. It will not, perhaps, be out of place here to

call attention to the significant fact that in connection with the *Wakf Act* (VI of 1918), one of the reasons which the Moslem leaders put forward in support of that measure was that it would tend to check this evil of fragmentation in their community.

As regards the other objection, it cannot be denied that a Hindu primarily desires that his dwelling house and other immovable properties should remain exclusively in the hands of his male descendants, if there be any. That the framers of the Code were fully alive to this popular feeling is evident from the fact that they have allowed the provisions of the *Partition Act* of 1893 to be invoked by a male heir against a female co-heir, in case the latter sues for partition; and this relief has not been confined to dwelling-houses merely, but has been extended to all other immovable properties jointly inherited. But whether the remedy provided is not worse than the disease is a matter for consideration.

Examining the question entirely on its own merits, we also find it difficult to support the proposal of making the daughter a co-heir with the son. No *Smriti* writer, ancient or modern, no school of Hindu law, progressive or otherwise, has recognized the daughter as such heir. Neither, so far as we are aware, is such a right in the daughter sanctioned by usage in any part of India. The legislature, therefore, is introducing an innovation, pure and simple, and as such it could be supported, only if an exceptionally strong case could be said to exist on grounds of justice and equity. But could such a case be really made out?

We are certainly in favour of making adequate provisions for the indigent daughter, and should welcome any attempt to remedy whatever defects there may be in the present law on the subject. But we can find no justification for going to the opposite extreme, by placing the daughter in a better position than the son himself, as would undoubtedly be the result under the Code. As a wife or a widow, the daughter gets a share in her husband's property and even as a widowed daughter-in-law, she has her rights of maintenance out of the estate of her father-in-law. In case the husband or husband's father leaves no property, she will be entitled as a widowed daughter to maintenance out of her father's estate. The unmarried daughter has

also her rights under the existing law to maintenance and marriage expenses out of her father's property: if necessary we should have no objection to legislation in order to secure such rights by creating a charge on the paternal estate. A daughter, married, unmarried or widowed, is also entitled to inherit the *stridhan* property of her mother. Where the daughter happens to be married, but the husband is extremely poor, cases are not rare when her father, if he can, makes adequate provision for her by will or otherwise, and the mother also will not often be found providing for the daughter out of her own *stridhan* properties.

### An Excellent Chapter

The chapter on maintenance, we must say, has been admirably worked out, and removes certain long-felt grievances.

The only other topic that in our opinion deserves serious comment relates to the question of marriage. We are constrained to observe that the Committee's approach to the subject has not been correct. The first thing that the legislature should do in dealing with marriage is to lay down the essential conditions of a valid marriage, viz. physical and mental capacity, age restrictions, prohibited relationship and so forth. The question of form, which is also essential, then comes in; and most systems of modern law prescribe a form of civil marriage as an alternative to religious marriage. In a civil marriage, however, the essentials remain the same, except that no religious ceremony need be gone through. It is against elementary rules of civilized jurisprudence to lay down that there should be one kind of prohibited degrees in the sacramental marriage, and a different kind in case of civil marriage. But that is what the Draft Code seeks to do for Hindus. Civil marriage should in that case cease to be a part of Hindu law, and must remain a separate branch of the law altogether. We notice with some surprise that the framers of the Code have gone much beyond the rules of the Special Marriage Act, and have permitted marriages even between first cousins, which is entirely obnoxious to Hindu sentiments. Whether civil marriage is made a part of Hindu law or is left to be

regulated by the Special Marriage Act, we are definitely of opinion that the essentials of a Hindu marriage except in the matter of ceremonies, should be the same in either form. In our opinion, the best thing would be to keep the civil marriage out of Hindu law altogether, and leave it to be regulated by the Special Marriage Act, with a repeal of those provisions thereof which provide that even when Hindus marry thereunder, they would be governed by the Indian Succession Act.

### Prohibited Degrees

While on this subject we might perhaps offer a few suggestions with regard to prohibited degrees, we are of opinion that the *sapinda* relationship should be reduced to five degrees on the father's side and three degrees on the mother's. This is quite in accordance with the *patthinashti* rule which is followed in Bengal, subject at the same time to the *trigotra* rule. As regards intercaste marriages, we think that such marriages, if they have taken place in fact, should not be regarded as invalid. As regards monogamy, we share the general view that as polygamy has practically disappeared from Hindu society, it is not necessary to enforce monogamy by legislation. We are entirely opposed to introducing divorce into Hindu law. We do not think that the right of divorce has conduced to greater social well-being or harmony in the systems where this right exists. At any rate the Hindu conception of marriage as a sacrament is diametrically opposed to the idea of divorce, and we feel this idea is abhorrent to the average Hindu. We may add that if divorce is at all allowed the grounds of divorce should be such as are recognized in other systems where it exists, and not what the Committee have thought fit to provide.

As we have said already, our comments on the Code do not profess to be exhaustive, but we believe we have said enough to justify our disapproval of it as a whole. Hard cases do and may arise under the existing law, but can human ingenuity devise any system of law which will be a guarantee against hardships in individual cases? Lastly we would add that the present time is singularly inopportune for introducing such controversial legislation.—*Hindusthan Standard*.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

In this number the *Conversations* are continued. . . . Swami Yatiswarananda, who is in Philadelphia, America, had sent *Religious Revival in East and West* for publication in the Golden Jubilee issue of this journal, but unfortunately it was received here too late for the purpose. The article will be found to be instructive and thought-provoking, as the Swami's writings usually are. . . . St. Nihal Singh continues his charming and delightful account of the past history of the *Prabuddha Bharata* in *A Backward Glance*. . . . Professor Das Gupta makes a vigorous plea for a well thought out plan of education in *Educational Reconstruction in India*. . . . Prof. Nicholas Roerich pleads in *Adamant* for a development of knowledge and art in terms of spirituality. . . . Prof. Mookerji shows up in *This is History* the one-sided nature of most historical accounts. . . . For the benefit of our readers we are giving *The Draft Hindu Code*, a subject which is now seriously exercising the minds of Hindu India.

### RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS IN SOCIAL LIFE

Emphasizing the need for true religious consciousness in all spheres of our life, and presenting a considered and correct interpretation of religion, Mr. Vishnu Prasad V. Baxi writes in the *Social Welfare* (15th June 1945) :

In ancient times, importance was placed on the need for the evolution of religious consciousness in man before he could be sent out to play his part in the social order of which he was an important member, and, therefore, the ancients evolved certain principles of inculcating culture, right from the stage from which the child began to live in the womb down to the time he became a householder and a full-fledged member of the society. For it was realized, above all, that for a soul to realize the ultimate end of existence, it was but essential that he must know what he really was and what part he was destined to play in the great plan wherein it was his lot to be placed.

The modern man, who is seldom sure of what the priests mean by religion, is unwilling to accept anything that is not, according to him, rational, and, therefore, does not satisfy his reason. He is unable to understand and

appreciate the value of religious teachings in practical life, especially when he finds a wide divergence between theory and practice of religion. Sectarianism, intolerance, and social inequality are often found among sections of people who call themselves religious. As a result, religion is held responsible for the evils of society. Those who hold this view are unaware of the correct meaning of the term religion. Mr. Baxi observes:

It must be understood that religion is not a creed or a sectarian dogma. It is a real living force. It is light and not darkness. Religion connotes the presence of fundamental essentials of an individual's existence. It is, as Vivekananda rightly explains 'the manifestation of divinity already in man'. . . . Right perception of the forces of life, right thinking on the problems of life, right conduct on the pathway of life, right appreciation of the moral values of life, these are the ingredients that explain the term religion. . . . Religion is not the tenets of a school of thought or a cult. Religion is the dynamic force giving life-blood to human existence through all ages. It is in essence a way of life.

All religions are based on morality and personal purity of the individual. They aim at reforming the members of society, and thus help to build a healthy social order. The basis of social ethics which govern the relations between man and man, is to be found in the Vedantic truth of the divinity of man and the oneness of existence.

Religion is the harbinger of strength, power, light, joy, and peace. It is not only a happy blending of the inner forces of our life but the harmonious fusion of the external currents of life's forces. . . . It is the inward monitor directing right conduct of life. Religion is self-knowledge, self-reverence, and self-control. . . . It does not lie in the cloistered existence of the hermit nor in the rituals of the priestly order nor in the precincts of temples erected for the propagation of the ideals of the various cults nor in the free thinker's loose way of life. It exists in the perennial depths of the human heart, in the individual and individual alone.

The trend of modern man is to become more group conscious—social, national, or communal—and to think and act in consonance with the demands of the group. In his attempt to follow the multitude, he is often called upon to subordinate his own reason or faith to what are said to be the interests of the state or community. A true

religious attitude rightly applied to social life inspires and guides one's relation to one's family, one's society, and to humanity in general. Therefore, it is clear that

So long as an individual remains imperfectly evolved he remains a clog on the wheels of society. Thus no evolution or progress is possible unless like the body physical the body social has all its organs in perfect health and normal condition, functioning each according to its allotted sphere, neither overlapping nor contradicting the functions of another member, but working as co-operative force aiding the other members to function properly. . . . This can be achieved only if the consciousness of his supreme and effulgent Self without which none of his actions can be conducted has dawned on him. . . . The improvement of the individual is thus the first essential of a healthy social order.

#### VEDANTA MOVEMENT IN AMERICA

The following account of the preaching work carried on by the monks of the Ramakrishna Order in the United States of America, testifies to the increasing appreciation of Hindu thought by the Americans. Even such well-known persons as Aldous Huxley and Christopher Isherwood have evinced keen interest in the study of Vedanta.

The growth of the Vedanta movement in the United States has established a link between the spiritual faiths of the East and the West.

In 12 major American cities, monks of the Ramakrishna Order have drawn hundreds of followers to the teachings of Hinduism, particularly the Vedanta. It is the only genuine Hindu movement in this country, yet the fact that students and followers consist almost entirely of Americans testifies to the universality of its appeal.

The movement first took root in America when Swami Vivekananda presented his interpretation of the Hindu faith at the great Parliament of Religions in Chicago in connection with the World's Columbian Exposition.

Since then, 13 centres have been established (there are two in New York), all under the direct spiritual guidance of monks of the Ramakrishna Order. The Hindu teachings are disseminated through public services at the centres, lectures at educational institutions, private instruction in spiritual discipline and publication of books on Vedanta and related subjects.

Unlike the work of the Ramakrishna Order in India, there has been no effort to engage in philanthropic or social welfare work, since these fields are adequately handled by established American agencies.

In carrying forward the precepts of Sri Ramakrishna, the Swamis of the American centres make no attempt to convert followers to Hinduism, but emphasize the underlying unity and harmony of all religions. For this reason the movement has appealed to persons of many faiths who, dissatisfied with the dogmas of their own churches, seek spiritual faith that will give richer meaning to their respective religious ideals.

#### New York Centre

One of the most active centres is the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, which is under the leadership of Swami Nikhilananda. Services are conducted each Sunday by the Swami, with the attendance averaging about 100 persons. Classes are held twice a week for the study and interpretation of Hindu scriptures. In addition, the Swami is constantly visited by persons wishing private instruction in spiritual discipline.

Swami Nikhilananda has written several books, whose wide distribution testifies to the growing interest in the Hindu faith in this country. Two thousand copies of the Swami's, 'The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna' have been sold since its publication in 1942. His translation of the 'Bhagavad Gita', published a year ago, is now in its second edition with 5,000 copies sold.

Swami Nikhilananda, ordained at Benares in 1922, came to America in 1931. After a year's work at the centre in Providence, Rhode Island, he founded the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre in 1933. Besides conducting the work of the Centre, the Swami gives frequent lectures in schools and universities. Reciprocally students of religion and philosophy visit the Centre and attend the Sunday services.

The Swami, interviewed in the large and comfortable building owned by the Centre, pointed out that another important feature of his work is giving spiritual instruction through correspondence to persons who live too far away to attend the Centre.

The universal character of the Hindu faith is visually expressed in the Centre's chapel, Raphael's Madonna and the Child and a painting of Sarada Devi adorn the walls. The altar is inscribed with the Hindu motto, 'Truth is one—sages call it by various names'.

The Centre observes all major Christian Holy Days, such as Christmas, Good Friday and Easter, with the Swami preaching on their universal meaning.

In the Swami's own words, the Vedanta philosophy, 'as a movement of goodwill, friendship, and spiritual understanding has strengthened the bond between India and America'.—U. P. A.

#### INDEPENDENCE THROUGH SELF-CONQUEST

The present war has shown that to secure or maintain its independence every country has had to make heroic sacrifices. Rich and poor alike, though belonging to different social or political groups, were called upon to sacrifice their individual interests in the cause of the nation. Conquest of personal prejudices and self-discipline are as much necessary as political acumen and martial spirit. Wars and famines are inevitable so long as jealousy, greed of gain, and the desire for exploitation reside in man. In the course of a dialogue, referring to the problem of self-government, Swami Vivekananda observed:

'Well, where is that martial spirit which, at the very outset, requires one to know how to serve and obey, and to practise self-restraint. The

martial spirit is not self-assertion but self-sacrifice. One must be ready to advance and lay down one's life at the word of command, before he can command the hearts and lives of others. One must sacrifice himself first.

Pride and love of power egg a man to put himself foremost. He is often anxious for name and fame. Therefore he makes a show of self-sacrifice, while at heart he is seeking an opportunity to earn public appreciation. The efforts of such persons, inspired by selfish ends, however spectacular, may not achieve lasting results. That a true worker of the nation has to aim at self-purification through faith in God and prayer was the advice given by Mahatma Gandhi before he left Panchgani last. He said that God is the greatest saviour in this world, and that man's pride could never stick before God's plans. He told those who attended his prayers not to do

so in a light-hearted manner but to sincerely commune with the Lord to gain strength and confidence in order to be able to do His work better.

Gandhiji observed that his conception of *Swaraj* was not mere political independence. He wanted to see dharma raj—establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, the reign of truth and non-violence in every walk of life. He, too, believed, along with others, that the time for India's independence had come nearer. Nevertheless, he wanted that people should repose their faith in prayer more than in the words of men. Gandhiji drew the attention of his hearers to the fact that most of them were still slaves to their passions, and added, 'if we conquered them, we could easily overcome the slavery under foreigners or our own conquerors'.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**I CANNOT DIE.** BY KRISHAN CHANDAR. (TRANSLATED BY K. AHMAD ABBAS). Published by *Kutub, The Indo-Foreign Publishers, Windy Hall Lane, Bombay 5.* Pp. 25. Price Rs. 2.4.

The Bengal famine is past, but not so its horrors. They are still there and, like a nightmare, they still haunt the mind. The wounds the famine has left on the people of Bengal cannot and will not heal up soon, and even when they heal up, life will not be the same for them. The people are struck low, are down on their faces, completely prostrate, completely exhausted, and are panting and are trying to regain breath, and it will be generations before they are up on their feet again. Economically and socially they are shattered, morally they are degraded, and politically they are dead. Of course things have improved a lot during the past one year, but still the problem for them is to live—only to live, and that is all that they care for and that is all that fills their minds. It is immaterial to them that the European war is ended and Hitlerite Germany is crushed and dead. It is even immaterial to them that the ministry, largely responsible for the famine and for all they have suffered from, has fallen, and there is, instead, the Section 93 rule in Bengal. What is material to them is if they can have more to eat and more to wear, if any measures are going to be taken to fight the rising death-rolls among them due to epidemics, if anything is going to be done to stamp out the many evils that beset their lives now following on the famine. They don't want to know and don't care to know what may happen outside their narrow little individual lives or the

lives of their families. If they want to know anything at all, they want to know if there is any power on earth (or in heaven) that can check the corruption and the greed and the rocketeering which surround them now and are about to choke them to death.

So this is the tale Bengal has to tell and it is the most moving, most pathetic tale that has ever been told anywhere and at any time. So many books have recently been published with the famine as the background and Bengal's sufferings as the theme, and how powerfully and vividly some of them depict the picture, too! But more books can be added and yet more, and still the tale may not be fully told and the picture may not be clear and complete. Of the books so far published on the subject, one most remarkable—remarkable in many ways—is *Ann Data* by Krishan Chandar. It is a long short story written in Urdu, and it is a story that can rank among the best written in any language. Superb in technique, vivid and penetrating in delineation, and with a vein of subtle, stinging satire running all through, it is a masterpiece of which any country can be proud.

The story is complete in three parts, each almost a story by itself; but the parts are closely knit together, and together they form a composite whole. But what is it the story tells in particular? Does it tell anything new? Of course it does not. It tells what so many other stories have told. It tells of the bungling of the bureaucracy, of its exasperating callousness in spite of the approaching calamity, of corruption, of uncontrolled prices, of hoarding, of the tricky blood-sucking profiteers,

of the confusion of the people and their utter helplessness—and, above all, of death—death stalking everywhere, in every village, in most homes, snatching away their dearest, sometimes completely wiping them out. It gives the same ghastly picture of hungry, famished people of the country-side trekking towards Calcutta in the mad hope that they may get some relief out of its plenty, but before reaching it, dying on the way, dying from sheer exhaustion, from hunger, from disease, and dying like cattle, like insects, by thousands, by tens of thousands. And the picture does not change when they reach Calcutta, for there they meet nothing but the much too familiar supercilious contempt of the privileged for the under dog, or, worse still, they meet the wily loathsome traffickers in women who, anxious to make gains out of the young flesh of their sisters and wives and daughters, induce them to barter away those dear ones for a morsel of food.

So this is the picture Krishan Chandar presents through his story, and it is the ablest, the most vivid picture so far drawn of Bengal's sufferings. Congratulations to him and to his translator, Abbas, who has done his job exceptionally well. Abbas has changed the title into 'I cannot die', and that is good, for it is more appropriate, for the spirit of man can never die; and it shall not die so long as the present state of affairs continues, so long as the under dog is treated as he is now, and he is not given a chance to play his role in the re-shaping of the world, and the privileged few go on ruling and, as inevitably as ever, bungling. Both the author and the translator are talented, and both are young and full of promise, and they have yet much to give to the country and to the world and they must give it. Once again congratulations to them.

**SHORT STORIES. (INTERNATIONAL SERIES Nos. 1 AND 2.)** *Published by International Book House, Ltd., Bombay. Pp. 212 and 171. Price Rs. 3-8 each.*

In these handy and excellently got-up volumes are presented select stories written by authors representing a wide variety of nationalities—authors, some of whom are well known and some obscure. Five more such volumes are scheduled to follow to complete the series.

It is good the publishers have undertaken the publication of such a series, for in these days when short stories are the craze, a collection of stories like this is bound to prove immensely helpful to the young litterateurs of our country. But more than this, there is the joy of having such an array of great masters brought together within a narrow compass, and it is a joy too great to be missed. And it will not do to forget that this is the first time such a joy is being made available to the Indian reading public. The publishers do indeed deserve much commendation.

It is not claimed by the publishers that their selection will satisfy all tastes. It will not, for it cannot. It represents, as it must, only their own tastes, which they are only too conscious others may not share. It is, therefore, no use

quarrelling about the selection, though there is really much room for it. But this need not deter one from making one criticism: that is about the insertion of poems here and there. These, in what purports to be a collection of short stories are out of place. If the excuse is made that otherwise some authors would have gone unrepresented, even then their inclusion would not seem justifiable.

There are a few galling printing mistakes in the volumes. These must at any rate be removed in the second edition.

**EDUCATION, POLITICS, AND WAR.** *By S. RADHAKRISHNAN. Published by International Book Service, Poona 4. Pp. 208. Price Rs. 5.*

Sir Radhakrishnan has spared no pains in rightly interpreting the cultural heritage of India to other nations. And in most of his speeches delivered in India, he has repeatedly drawn the attention of Indians to the right and healthy type of nationalism at a time when the tendency to imitate foreign doctrines and ideologies is growing. The illuminating speeches of Sir Radhakrishnan, collected together in this volume, cover a wide range of interesting subjects such as education, religion, politics, social service, Indian culture, communal amity, and war. This collection also includes statements to the press issued by him. These speeches and statements were made at different times during the years 1938-44, and reveal the sound and liberal views of this reputed patriot-philosopher on the burning problems of the day. The war and peace aims of the warring nations are critically analysed, and a stirring call made for the grant of self-determination to Indians and the establishment of a federation of free nations. Some of the remarkable speeches are: 'Religion and Politics', 'Federation of Free Nations', 'Education and Spiritual Freedom', 'Purpose of Education', 'India's Heritage', and 'Religion and Social Service'.

**GANDHIJI'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE GOVERNMENT (1942-44).** *Published by the Navajivan Publishing House, Kalupur, Ahmedabad. Pp. xxviii + 308. Price Rs. 2-8.*

In the book under review is published the entire correspondence between Mahatma Gandhi and the Government of Bombay, the Viceroy, and the Central Government, during the period August 1942—July 1944, together with some other miscellaneous correspondence. It is well known that during the greater part of this period, Gandhiji was in detention, and, therefore, these letters could not be published in the press at the time they were written. They have now been made available to the public in authentic form, and presented in separate well arranged sections. The correspondence is divided into nine sections for convenient understanding of the readers, and Gandhiji has written a short foreword. The notable portions of the correspondence are sections II and V—the former consisting of correspondence with the Government of India relating to the August disturbances, and in connection with Gandhiji's fast in detention; the latter section covering the corres-

pondence on and Gandhiji's reply to the charges contained in the Government publication 'Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances 1942-43'.

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION FOR 1948.** Published by the United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. Pp. 609. Price \$2.

We have received the *Report of the Smithsonian Institution* of the United States for the year 1948, and are glad to note that the useful and essential activities of the Institution have been maintained, though many of the research and exploration projects have had to be discontinued owing to wartime conditions. Mention may be made of the following contributions reproduced in this volume. 'The Sea as a Storehouse' by E. F. Armstrong; 'Dangerous Reptiles' by Doris M. Cochran; 'The Planks of China and Their Usefulness to Man' by Egbert H. Walker; 'Some Food Problems in War Time' by George R. Cowgill; and 'Some Biological Effects of Solar Radiation' by Brian O'Brien. There are numerous illustrative plants and drawings, and the printing and get-up of the volume are excellent.

### BENGALI

**BHAKTA MANOMOHAN.** Published by *Udbodhan Karyalaya, Bughbazar, Calcutta.* Pp. 276. Price Re. 1-12.

Manomohan was one of the foremost among Sri Ramakrishna's lay disciples. Like many others of his age he had turned an agnostic under the spell of Western education and had learnt to pooh-pooh the traditional beliefs of his religion. But when he came to know Sri Ramakrishna, a great change came over him, as did over others who were even greater agnostics than he. In Sri Ramakrishna he saw the truth of those beliefs so palpably demonstrated that he found it impossible not to accept them. Even to his doubting mind, confirmed in agnosticism, Sri Ramakrishna's spell proved irresistible, for it was the spell of truth itself. He accepted Sri Ramakrishna whole-heartedly, unreservedly. And once his doubts were cleared and faith was established Manomohan's spiritual progress was phenomenal. Apart from Sri Ramakrishna, two other factors helped most in this progress: his own hankering after spiritual experience and the encouragement and example of his mother—the noblest mother imaginable. Although not neglectful of his worldly duties—for Sri Ramakrishna himself would not allow such a thing—he was completely, to the uttermost degree, given to the quest of God. One is amazed to see how, in spite of all the demands of worldly

life, he could have done so. Indeed, the story of this simple soul—his struggles and ultimate success—must prove immensely helpful to those seekers of God who are similarly placed. The dominant notes of his life were faith and fervour, and these were so strong in him that even the most prejudiced reader is bound to be impressed. In later years Manomohan was all the time busy teaching and guiding others. By his simple but stirring words he drew hundreds and they derived much inspiration and help from him. It is wonderful how the magic touch of Sri Ramakrishna transformed this one-time agnostic into a saint, loved and respected by many.

As side-lights the book presents many interesting and intimate details about the other disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Swami Virajananda Maharaj, President of the Ramakrishna Mission, who knew Manomohan personally, has contributed a foreword and this has greatly enhanced the value of the book.

**DHAMMAPADA.** By BHIKSHU SILABHADRA. Published by Mahabodhi Society, 4/A, College Square, Calcutta. Pp. 103. Price 8 As.

The *Dhammapada* is a concise and consolidated account of Buddhist doctrine and practice. Bhikshu Silabhadra has done a distinct service to the cause of the propagation, in Bengal, of the noble ideas contained in the sublime book by giving the Pali text (in Bengali characters) together with a readable and accurate translation in Bengali. The printing and get-up are good. The price is only eight annas and every religious-minded Bengalee ought to have a copy of it in his private library.

### SANSKRIT—ENGLISH

**SONGS DIVINE.** By SWAMI ABHEDANANDA. Published by Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 19B, Raja Rajkrishna Street, Calcutta. Pp. 118+xx. Price Rs. 2.

The book under review contains a collection of Sanskrit hymns composed by Swami Abhedenanda, along with the English translation in verse by P. Seshadri Aiyer of Travancore University. The hymns are addressed to Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi, and reveal the inner message of their teachings. Some *upanishadic* prayers, *mantras*, and hymns are also included in this collection, together with the English rendering of these Vedic chants by Swami Abhedenanda. This neatly printed book of hymns and prayers will be of much help to devoted spiritual aspirants. There is a glossary of Sanskrit terms. Musical notations of two hymns set to music by the Swami are also given.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, ASANSOL

#### REPORT FOR 1939-44

The activities of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Asansol, fall under the following three main heads :—

(1) *Religious and Cultural* : About 100 religious classes were held every year (except in 1943) during the period under review, the maximum being 300 in 1939. As usual some public lectures were organized every year, and birthday anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna and other saints were celebrated. Since 1940 Durga Puja, Kali Puja, and Sarasvati Puja were also duly observed, and on these occasions the local people took great interest.

(2) *Philanthropic* : The Ashrama conducts a charitable (homoeopathic) outdoor dispensary for rendering medical aid to the local people. A temporary medical relief centre, started in 1944, supplied free medicine to 1768 sufferers. Blankets and chuddars were distributed free to the poor of the locality in 1944. A free kitchen, catering to about 15,000 destitutes, was run on the Ashrama premises for six months, in 1943, under the patronage of the local Rotary Club.

(3) *Educational* : A day-school, which was started in 1939, has gradually developed into a high English school. It has recently been affiliated to the Calcutta University. A small students' home, for deserving boys, is maintained by the Ashrama, consisting of paying and free boarders. There is a library and a reading-room for the use of the public.

The urgent needs of the Ashrama are :—  
(1) Rs. 30,000/- for the construction of a separate building for the Ashrama inmates and for housing the shrine, thus setting apart the entire existing building for the high school. (2) A kitchen block is a great necessity, the estimated cost of which is Rs. 10,000/-.

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, NARAYANGANJ

#### REPORT FOR 1941-44

We give below a short account of the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission, Narayanganj (Dacca), during the years 1941-43, including the distress relief work which was admirably organized by that Centre of the Mission during April 1943—September 1944. Its general activities fall under the following three heads :—

*Educational* : A students' home, started in 1940, continued to impart physical, moral, and spiritual training to a number of boarders, paying and free. There were 86, 26, and 88 students respectively at the end of each of the three years under review. The numbers of free students during the same period were 5, 8, and 2 respectively. In the Matri-

culation Examination during the three years, 8 students appeared of whom 7 came out successful, 2 being placed in the first division. The boys were encouraged to take physical exercise and play games regularly. They were taken on excursions to several places. Debates and discussions were held for the intellectual development of the boys. The construction of a permanent building for the students' home was completed in 1941. The Mission library and reading-room were largely and profitably used by the public.

*Religious* : Scriptural classes were held in the Ashrama twice a week. Several public lectures were organized during the years under review in Narayanganj and other neighbouring places. Birthday anniversaries of saints and prophets were celebrated, and the Durga Puja was performed every year.

*Charitable* : The homoeopathic charitable dispensary treated 6,746 cases in 1941, 8,065 cases in 1942, and 9,248 cases in 1943. Several poor families were given rice doles, and pecuniary help was given to 125 needy persons.

*Distress Relief* : During the period of acute distress in Bengal, the Mission accepted the offer of the government to sell rice at controlled rates to the public who came from remote places to purchase rice. As the situation grew worse, free distribution of rice, dal, cloth, and blankets was undertaken as part of the general scheme of relief work organized and supervised by the Headquarters of the Mission. Up to 30th Sept. 1944, a total quantity of 5,695 mds. 29 srs. of rice was distributed among 152,426 recipients, and 5,048 pieces of cloth and blankets were distributed.

The present needs of this Centre are funds for the acquisition of land and construction of buildings for the start of an allopathic department to offer greater and up-to-date medical aid to the people of the locality.

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASADAN, HOWRAH

#### REPORT FOR 1941-44

The activities of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevasadan, Salkia, Howrah, for the years 1941-44, may be brought under the following heads :—

*Philanthropic* : Regular monthly doles of rice and help in cash were given to 18 families in 1941, 17 families in 1942, 14 families in 1943, and 11 families in 1944. Besides these, blankets and cloth were distributed to 72 persons during the period under review.

The Centre organized relief work (in co-operation with other relief organizations) in Howrah during the period of famine and distress in Bengal in 1943 and 1944. About 500 mds. of rice and over 1000 pieces of cloth were distributed, and food centres for about 800 persons were organized.

The charitable dispensary, run by the Sevasadan, treated 49,796 cases in 1941, 41,581 cases in 1942, 35,017 cases in 1943, and 43,788 in 1944.

**Educational :** The Sevasadan conducts a free students' home for school and college students, which accommodated 16, 18, 5, and 7 students respectively, in the four years under review. As the buildings of the students' home are in a dilapidated condition, this activity has had to be suspended till suitable accommodation becomes available.

The library and reading-room were well utilized by the students and the public.

**Religious :** Owing to want of suitable accommodation the weekly scriptural classes and discourses have had to be suspended. However, the birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna, and some Hindu festivals like Durga Puja and Sarasvati Puja were celebrated each year.

**Needs :** A sum of at least Rs. 20,000/- is required for renovating the Sevasadan buildings, and erecting new buildings for the dispensary and the students' home.

#### RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION, BANKURA

REPORT FOR 1944

**Religious :** During the year under report, 12 lectures and 273 religious classes were held. Birthday celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna and other saints, as well as some Hindu festivals were observed. A new temple of Sri Ramakrishna has been completed.

**Educational :** There were 14 students in the homoeopathic school attached to the Mission dispensary, and the Saradananda Students' Home had 11 students.

The newly started free Primary School at Ramharipur had 55 students on the rolls. The library and reading-room with 1,323 books and 26 magazines were regularly utilized by the students and the public.

**Philanthropic :** The total number of cases treated in the charitable dispensary during the year was 81,860, of which 27,073 were new cases. The number of indoor cases was 66.

Relief work was carried on in 65 villages during the year. Over 600 mds. of rice, and about 5000 pieces of cloth and 1000 blankets were distributed,

together with a large quantity of dal, milk, biscuits, and barley. Medical relief was also organized, and quinine and multi-vitamin tablets were distributed.

The total income of the Mission centre for the year under report was Rs. 4,762-7-6, and the total expenditure was Rs. 3,904-14-9.

#### VEDANTA SOCIETY, PORTLAND

The work of the Vedanta Society of Portland, Oregon, U.S.A., has progressed steadily during the past year, despite the war-time handicaps. Swami Devatmananda spoke twice every Sunday, morning and evening. He also held the two week-day classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays, when he gave discourses on the Gita and the Vivekachudamani respectively.

The following special events of the year were duly observed in regular succession. Worship of the Goddess Durga for three days, morning and evening; anniversary celebration; worship of the Goddess Kali; Christmas; New Year's Eve; birthday anniversaries of Swami Vivekananda, Holy Mother, Swami Brahmananda, Swami Saradananda, Swami Shivananda, Sri Ramakrishna, and Lord Buddha; and the Easter Sunrise Service at the Ashrama. The added feature of the year's activities under review, was a series of special worships, morning and evening, Swami Devatmananda conducted in the shrine, on the occasions of the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, and others. These occasions were a constant source of inspiration to a group of devotees that attended them. Also, the Society was happy to hold the annual birthday Dinners in spite of the food rationing and wartime difficulties of various sorts due to which the work at the Ashrama had been much hampered.

#### VEDANTA SOCIETY, SAN FRANCISCO

The programme of work of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, San Francisco, for the month of April 1945, has reached us. The Swami-in-charge delivered nine bi-weekly lectures during the month. Some of the subjects chosen were: 'Spiritualizing Everyday Life', 'Yoga—Mystery or Science?' 'Divine Will, Free Will, and Karma', and 'How to Practise Detachment'.

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. L.

SEPTEMBER, 1945

No 9



“उत्तिष्ठत जापत प्राप्य वराभिवोधत ।”

“Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI SHIVANANDA

BELUR MATH, JULY 1927

Roughly five in the afternoon. Mahapurush Maharaj was sitting in his room. Some devotees also were there. The talk turned on a four-year old boy who was very clever with *tablas*.<sup>1</sup> Mahapurushji remarked, ‘This sort of phenomenon compels us to believe in the transmigration of the soul. How can you explain this skill at such an early age unless you admit that it is from the previous birth that he has got it? No one has taught him to play on *tablas*, still he can play so well, with perfect rhythm.’

After evening prayer followed the singing of *Rama-nam*. All the monks and many lay devotees were there. Mahapurush Maharaj also was there in his appointed seat, listening in an absorbed mood. In due course the singing came to a close. The lay devotees were served *prasad*<sup>2</sup> and they were preparing to go home. They went to Mahapurushji to pay their respects before leaving. Address-

sing them Mahapurushji said, ‘This *Rama-nam keertan* Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) first heard during his tour in South India. He liked it very much and taught it to the young monks of the Math (Belur Math). Now it is sung on every *Ekadashi*<sup>3</sup> day. And in a short time it has spread all over the country. How many people derive peace and joy from it ! It was Swamiji’s (Swami Vivekananda’s) heart’s desire that Mahavira should be worshipped in every home in India. Mahavira was a celibate right from his childhood. Self-consciousness will grow among our people if they take to the worship of Mahavira.’

Most of the devotees were gone. Mahapurush Maharaj was now to have his dinner. One devotee who had not yet left was discussing with him the question of caste. He said, ‘Maharaj, some people blame Swamiji because he has defied all caste rules by instituting the system that during anniver-

<sup>1</sup> Small musical drums.

<sup>2</sup> Food which has been offered to a deity and of which he is supposed to have partaken.

<sup>3</sup> Eleventh day of any fortnight, dark or bright.

sary celebrations all, irrespective of caste, should eat together.'

Hearing this Mahapurushji said, 'Look at the perversity! During all celebrations here cooking is done by brahmins, and the food is offered to *Thakur*. No exception is done even when hundreds of maunds of food are involved. In such cases the whole thing is offered to God and then distributed among the devotees. And the devotees take the food of their own accord. We never insist that they eat together. Never. If, in spite of this, we are blamed, well, then we are helpless. Here is food cooked by brahmins on the bank of the Ganges and offered to God. Do you object even to this kind of food? If one so liked, one would know well enough what to say to these critics. Where is any caste at all nowadays? Serving under a shudra for twelve years turns you also into a shudra. I know a bit too much about these things. Nowadays brahmins serve under shudras not for twelve years but for twenty-four years. How can they still boast of caste? They hardly care for their own personal life or conduct. All they do is to fuss about the caste. Where are those holy duties enjoined upon brahmins—those sacrifices, those charities, those austerities? That is why Swamiji deploringly remarked, "Your religion now is in the cooking-pots, you caste-ridden fellows!"'

The next day was Sunday. There was quite a crowd in Mahapurushji's room. A few devotees of both sexes were there from Barisal. They were anxious to have a few words of instruction. One old man acted as their mouthpiece. He said, 'Maharaj, do please teach us a bit. We are pure worldlings. We are suffering so. Please bless us that we may have a little peace in life.' Touched by the old man's earnestness Mahapurushji said, 'What further advice shall I give you? We have only one advice to give: Don't forget Him. This is the chief thing. We ourselves try to do this. We ask others also to do the same. You are in the world; that is quite as well. Who is outside it? But don't forget Him. Do all your worldly duties;

at the same time pray to Him with all sincerity, at least once in the day. Worldly duties have to be done; I don't suggest you should give them up. I only suggest in the midst of them you will think of Him, pray to Him, repeat His name. In Vaishnava scriptures the advice is given that man should "work with the hand and at the same time repeat Hari's name with the lips". This is indeed a wonderful idea. In whatever we do we must not forget to repeat His name. As each work has its scheduled time and a distinct purpose to serve, so also prayer. Keep apart some particular time for it. Despite everything try to pray then. And no matter how long you pray, pray sincerely. He is the indweller; He watches the attitude of your mind. This is the secret. This is the way of getting some little peace in the world. If you forget this, everything will go wrong.'

A lady-devotee: 'But why do we forget God, Maharaj? Why does not our mind turn towards Him?'

Maharaj: 'Why you forget Him, mother? Well, that is what is called *maya*. You are caught in the meshes of *maya*. That is why you forget Him; that is why leaving aside God the mind is engrossed in transient things. Do you love God as much as you love material objects? Is it necessary to emphasize too much that this world is only for a short while, and your body, your near and dear ones—everything, in the centre of which is "I and mine" and to which you are so passionately attached now, is subject to decay? You see clear enough how shortlived material objects are. What you see today you don't see tomorrow; now it is here, next moment it is not; now it is born, next moment it is dead; now happiness, next moment sorrow. And yet you are quite content with this state of affairs.'

Lady-devotee: 'What is our way out? How can we escape from this? Please bless us a little.'

Maharaj: 'That this world is shortlived you never grasp fully except through His grace. There is no other way, mother, of

escaping from it except through His grace. The Lord Himself has said in the Gita, "This *maya*, which has bewitched the whole creation, stands like an impassable barrier. It is indeed difficult to overcome it. They only can overcome it who pray to me with single-minded devotion." There is no other way but that you must pray to Him with single-minded devotion. You are in the world, you have many duties to perform; you have no time for elaborate spiritual practices. It will do for you if you throw yourself completely on His mercy and weep. Weep and pray, "Lord, have mercy on us.

have mercy on us." Through weeping all the impurities of the mind will be washed away. Then He will unfold Himself in the splendour of a thousand suns. And you will see then He is always within yourself. Weep bitterly; also cultivate the power of discrimination. God alone does not decay; everything else is subject to decay—this world, life and death, joy and sorrow, everything. Continue with this kind of discrimination alongside of prayer. Eventually you will attain His grace. You will develop then dispassion for the world and your mind will then turn towards God.'

## WHENCE PEACE ?

BY THE EDITOR

### I

The usually successful men in the world belong to the aggressive, domineering type or group. This group depends on its own efforts for its improvement, is active, and is willing to undergo any amount of trouble and sacrifice in order to achieve its ends. Persons in this group generally derive their strength of action from the conviction that man is the architect of his own fate and can make his own hell or heaven, and are extremely self-centred. Napoleon, Hitler and others belong to this type. In Hindu mythology Ravana and Hiranyakashipu are the leading examples of this class. Such people believe sincerely in their own infinite capacity for achievement, are often gifted by nature with extraordinary physical or mental powers, and often combine with their supreme self-confidence a belief that they are the favourites of fortune or Providence. These are the classes which carve out a place for themselves in the world. They stop at no means to achieve their ends and seldom recognize any moral or spiritual law except

their own imperious wills and impulses. The glorification of the tribe or the nation with the leading individual as typical of the whole is but a moderated form of the inordinate thirst for self-aggrandizement and overlordship. As these belong to the *rajasic* group extra-mundane thoughts seldom gain ascendancy over their minds. To them the outside world is the real world. All that must be achieved and enjoyed lies *out there*. The basis of all their vital energies is the body, the mind, and the ego—all combined in one. Seldom does there arise any thought of the impermanence or unreality of all visible things in the minds of such people. As the Gita says, such people are predominantly possessed of greed, activity, the undertaking of actions, and unrest. In their view purity, good conduct, and truth are but social conventions developed by weak, superstitious people. They hold that the universe is without truth, morality, or God but uphold the principles of sexual lust and reproduction operating everywhere in the biological kingdom as the source of all life. Holding such views they stop at nothing cruel or immoral,

and engulf the world in destruction as a result of the pursuit of their horribly selfish desires. Filled with pride and arrogance, they are bent upon the extermination of all who stand in the way of their unholy and impure desires. Given to lust, wrath, and hypocrisy, they strive to acquire by all sorts of unjust and wicked means hoards of wealth for sensual enjoyment. Ever impelled by greed they desire to conquer one nation after another, one group after another, one enemy after another. Self-conceited, haughty, filled with the pride and intoxication of worldly wealth and the power of deadly armaments, these malignant people try to impose their tyranny upon all who do not belong to their nation or group. They thus make a hell of this earth not only for themselves but also for all good people who wish to live in truth, peace, and love of God and fellow men. The whole of life in Europe culminating in the recent tragedy of Nazism under Hitler and Fascism under Mussolini is a blazing example of what Hindu wise men have termed as *asuric*. Such tyrants like Hitler and Mussolini are plenty not only in the political and economic fields, but even in the sacred field of religion many such wolves in sheep's clothing go on doing their marauder's work. These deluded tyrants believe that the outside world is the only reality, man's present life is the only one, and so strive insanely only after the pleasures of the senses. Without belief in God or a future life, these fools are born again and again as wicked human beings or as lower creatures. As the Gita says, 'These malicious and cruel evil-doers, most degraded of men, I hurl perpetually into the wombs of *asuras* only, in these worlds.'

## II

But the *asuric* type of man is most miserable even in this life. The human mind requires a support, *alambana* as the *upanishads* say, a belief that life is worth while and that there are higher values to be striven for and achieved. But in the twentieth century there has been a progressive disintegration of

belief, especially in Western countries. The traditional sources of authority have ceased to inspire faith, and the old institutions no longer command any homage. This is true of the whole social system whether in the political, economic, or religious fields. The last Great War and the present war as well as the Russian Revolution and its spectacular success in building up a stable body politic in the vast areas included in Russia have given the *coup de grace* to any belief that lingered in men's minds. As Bertrand Russell says :

'This old order is no longer capable of bringing happiness. It is not only its nominal victims who suffer, it is not only the defeated nations or proletarians who find that life has lost its meaning. Even the well-to-do classes of western Europe have no longer the sense of anything to live for. Having no purpose in life, they have plunged into a frantic pursuit of pleasure. But with every added pleasure comes added unhappiness; while the senses are gratified the soul remains hungry—there is no inward sense of well-being, but only futility and despair.'

'There is only one cure for this despair, and that is a faith which men can believe. No man can be happy unless he feels his life in some way important; so long as his life remains a futile round of pleasures or pains leading to no end, realizing no purpose that he believes to be of value, so long it is impossible to escape despair. In most men at the present time the despair is dumb and unconscious, and because it is unconscious it cannot be avoided. It is like a spectre always looking over a man's shoulder and whispering acid words into his ear, but never seen, never looked at face to face. Once acknowledged, once faced, this despair can be coped with, but it can be coped with only by a new belief, by something which supersedes the search for pleasure. Although it may sound old-fashioned to say so, I do not believe that a tolerable existence is possible for an individual or a society without some sense of duty.' (*The Prospects of Industrial Civilization*, pp. 156-7.)

The cure which Bertrand Russell suggests for the evils consequent upon the *asuric* policy followed by capitalistic oppressors all over the world is socialism of the Russian variety, purified of its crudities and its ruthlessness. According to him modern man has lost faith in such ideals as God, country, family, and that there is only one kind of duty that the modern man can acknowledge: without superstition, and that is a duty to the community. He says, 'Socialism is, I believe, the only faith which can restore happiness to the world, which can cure it of the sickness left by war, which can give men the sense that their lives are capable of something better than pleasure, and can end the despair that drives men to frivolous cruelty.' (*ibid.* p. 158.)

And what are the advantages that socialism of the Russian variety offers? With a scientific socialistic organization it is expected that every man would have enough without long hours of work. There will be no commercialism, no competitive struggle for markets, no luxury of the very rich, but there will be sufficiency and leisure for all, freedom for the creative people, the men of science, and the artists, freedom for the pursuit of knowledge and in the beautifying of life not only for the few but for the many also. Class distinctions and economic exploitation will have gone. Labour will become so productive that men will work according to their abilities. Each will take from the store of produced goods only according to his needs. The new motto of society will be 'From each according to his powers; to each according to his needs.' The day of compulsion will have gone. Men will give freely of their best and receive equally freely the best in return.

### III

With the growth of greater self-consciousness among the proletariat all over the world, exploiters and capitalists will find the poorer classes less and less willing to be contented and obedient tools without adequate reward. The patricians of ancient Rome had to keep

the plebeians contented with liberal doles. Modern capitalists try to keep labour contented with better wages, better houses, and increased amenities up to a limit. The unemployed and the pauper class are kept on unemployment doles, poor relief, and old age pensions. But the force of the appeal of socialism lies in this: it is a revolt against the inhuman nature of the whole capitalistic system based on greed, exploitation, and oppression. A faith, bordering on religious faith, has been observed by Russell and others in Russian socialism. The basis of this faith is the community of feeling of all the oppressed and sweated as belonging to one class as against their exploiters who have refused to respect, what they have felt to be their most sacred thing, their humanity, their right to be treated as fellow human beings. Its motive force is class hatred. Capitalists have become keenly aware of this rising danger to their interests. The following press message shows this clearly:

New York, June 18.—Rep. Claire Boothe Luce, (Rep.), Conn., said that Russian Communism employing terroristic techniques similar to that used in Nazism, was sweeping Europe.

Mrs. Luce urged the United States to use all its power to support anti-Communist governments in nations to which it has military or diplomatic access.

Speaking before the Men's Faculty Club of Columbia University, she said that the world had nothing to fear from the Russian people. She said they themselves are victims of Communist techniques. But it is time, she added, that 'we drew a moral balance sheet on Communism'.

Russian policy in Europe, she said, has meant 'exile or death to everybody in every country occupied by the Soviet, regardless of that person's political beliefs, if he does not follow the Soviet program'.

'For the men of the Kremlin, truth is what Stalin says it is on Monday, and it may be something else again on Tuesday,' she said. Mrs. Luce recently returned from a tour of European battle-fronts.

'No bloody Nazi nonsense darkens our mind about the fact that what the Nazis did was murder,' she said. 'Nor should the Communists deceive us that such deeds are not murder too. And murder is evil.'

Mrs. Luce said 13 nations in Central Europe already were controlled by Communists. She warned that Italian Communists may be able to take over that nation by terrorization after the withdrawal of American and British forces.—U.P.A.

No wonder that capitalists all over the world are alarmed. Socialism is outbidding the capitalists as much by its promises to the proletariat as by its performances. The

policy of capitalists had been unscientific exploitation so far. They did not care if their exploitation produced misery and famine. But now in the face of the upsurge of socialism, they are coming to their senses and want to make their exploitation scientific. In the New Order planned by capitalists the exploited will be made to feel that they are better off than they would ever be if left to their own resources. Welfare schemes of all kinds will try to smoothen the difficulties and disabilities of the exploited, while propaganda by newspaper, cinema and radio will be manipulated to make them feel that they, in their own interests, ought to be willing partners with the capitalists. That is why we read in the press that freedom from want and economic rehabilitation are more important than the nineteenth century ideal of political freedom. Regionalism, both economic and military, is to be the new slogan. But unfortunately this regionalism is to run on racial lines. The white nations are to form a block by themselves. The hegemony of the whites under the economic and military leadership of England and America is to be the programme for the second half of the twentieth century. All enemies of white hegemony are to be crushed. Russia seems to be the greatest menace to the policy of Anglo-American supremacy because she stands not only for equality of races but also because she is the protagonist of Communism.

But the point we want to make here is that the forces, whether capitalistic or communistic, that now rule the world are all *asuric* in their intrinsic nature. Nazism, the most blatant *asuric* creed, based itself on might, and was indeed a greater danger to the world than the capitalistic imperialism of England and America or the communistic tyranny of the totalitarian state. These latter showed or have at least pretended to show some outward concern for spiritual and human values. Nazism with its cult of Nordic superiority and the reliance on mere might of armaments rightly deserved its doom. But the victors have not yet shown a better rule of life for nations and men.

The pernicious doctrines of racial superiority and justification of injustice on the principle of might is right have not lost any of their vitality. The Big Three appear, to put it bluntly, like three robbers dividing the spoils. One should not be surprised if they fall out, as almost always happens in such cases.

#### IV

The cure, to our mind, for the evils of modern civilization does not lie, therefore, in exchanging capitalism for socialism as has become the fashion nowadays to proclaim. Like capitalism, socialism indeed has many good points. But the fact that, like capitalism, it is also based on naked violence does not give any hope that in the ultimate result it will prove to be any better for all concerned. It may perhaps do away with some of the evils of capitalism, but what guarantee is there that it will not bring greater evils in its train? One may legitimately suspect whether any regime that is based on hate and fear and violence can give birth to an order rooted in fraternity. The spirit of man takes its revenge ultimately for degradation inflicted upon it even in the name of all that is good. Mahatma Gandhi said recently, perhaps ironically, that he would welcome communism if it were based on non-violence. But this is like saying that he would welcome imperialism if it were based on non-violence and truth! The truth of the matter is that it is the *asuric* nature of the leaders and consequently of their policies that is responsible for the mess that the world finds itself in.

This *asuric* nature must give way to the godly. The *asuric* conduct leads to further ignorance and bondage of all kinds. The godly nature leads to fuller knowledge and freedom in all directions. Men with the godly nature must combine and take the lead, and stop the rot in world affairs. The policy of the leaders should be *lokasangraha*, the good of all to the invidious exclusion of no class, nation, or race. But the leaders

themselves must be fearless, noble, steadfast in their views, self-controlled and upright. They must command the respect and obedience of the world for their policies by their justice, non-aggressive attitude, compassion, uncovetousness, purity, absence of hatred, and absence of pride. Individual and national unrighteousness in every form must be eschewed by them. They should lead their peoples to aim at the realization of nobler ideals rather than be led to serve the baser interests of the multitude in their efforts to win popular support. The attainment of the four freedoms nobly adumbrated by the late President Roosevelt must be for all and not for a few at the cost of the many. The competitive struggle between nations must give place to emulative co-operation. Intra-specific competition is good within the limits of intra-specific co-operation. Violence as the basis of society must be alienated and the goodwill and support of the many must become the basis of all government. The leaders by virtue of their valuable gifts of mind and body, should try to serve their fellow men, remove ignorance and poverty, and bring into the home of every man the treasures of knowledge and the calm security of an assured freedom from fear of want. The divinity of man must be recognized, and education must be such as to evoke the manifestation of the nobler qualities lying

dormant in him. While it is quite true that man's immediate duty lies in this world, that fact should not blind us to the reality of the spiritual nature of the whole universe. The materialistic conception of the universe must give place to the fuller realization of the conception of the spiritual order underlying all things. Men ought to be considered more important than the mere multiplication of material things. After all man is the measure of all things; and if we belittle his value, we belittle everything. The organization of men and materials towards mutual destruction by nations must give place to an organization for the combined use of all resources for the betterment of all mankind. Nor is this a Utopian proposal. Given the change of heart from the *asuric* to the *divine* view of things, one fails to see why the energies of the millions of people and the vast millions of dollars now wasted in mere destructive activity should not be turned to the admittedly nobler purpose of uplifting mankind. It is only stupidity, pride, and vested interests that stand in the way. Let us hope the horrors of war will bring wisdom to the nations and lead them to the upward path of peaceful spiritual evolution and turn them away from the hellish path of violence and mutual destruction. For that way alone lies the road to happiness and peace.

## VEDANTA AND COMMUNISM

By SWAMI SHARVANANDA

Some fifty years ago Swami Vivekananda wrote in his Bengali book *Modern India* that four castes,—the brahmins, kshatriyas, vaishyas, and shudras,—have their turn in getting paramountcy over human society. In the early days of human history,—brahmins, had the supremacy in ruling the society. The headman of the clan was not only the ruling chief and law-giver but also

the chief priest of the clan. With the waning of the priestly influence there rose up the kshatriya power, the power of the martial people. That was the age of chivalry. The kings and chieftains, by force of their prowess and physical valour held sway over the society. Thereafter with the spread of industries and commerce and the development of powerful trade organizations, it was

the capitalists and industrial magnates who came to the forefront in the field of influence and the soldiers, the kshatriyas, had to take the back-bench, by becoming their hirelings. It is these capitalists and trade magnates, the vaishyas of all races, who are still holding sway in human society. But their days are numbered and there are signs to show that their influence and power would soon pass away into the hands of the shudras,—the labourers of the field, the workers of the factories, those of the lowest strata of the society who had hitherto formed the grist for the capitalists' mills. He further foretold that the shudras would rise with their ploughs and sickles and hammers and would hold the reins of society.

The victory of Bolshevik Russia over Germany prognosticates fairly well that in future communistic Russia is going to dominate over modern Europe, and her ideology is going to influence deeply the re-shaping of the social life of the next generation.

In India, too, we cannot escape the repercussion of this new movement. Already there are ample signs in the form of communistic movements, labour movements, kishan movements and such others, which go to show which way the wind is blowing. Swamiji even asserted that a new India should arise from the farms and market-places, from labourers' grovelling huts and coolies' miserable dens. And the classes must either give their full aid to the rising masses or disappear to the inane. It is going to be and none can check the onrush of the tidal wave. The British government, the master of modern India, is itself the product of vaishya mentality, the shop-keeper's brain. It shall have to yield place to the power which will be born of the new shudra movement.

But there is one danger inherent in this shudra movement. If the shudra rises as a shudra, devoid of the culture of the upper classes, then it would be quite likely that under his sway emphasis would be laid on the gross physical aspect of life and the old

spiritual culture of India would get buried under the debris of materialism; and in that case, old India will die and in its place would be born a new hybrid India. That would indeed be a great loss, not only to India proper but to the whole world also. India's great contribution to the larger humanity has ever been her spiritual culture. From prehistoric time India has been sending out from age to age, her messengers of spiritual culture to the outer world and thereby she raised the tone of life to a lofty strain. So naturally with her spiritual death, it is the world at large which would be poorer for the catastrophe.

Hence to save India from this terrible cataclysm there is but one alternative: The classes must hand down their spiritual culture to the shudras, the shudras must be enlightened and enlivened by the light of the spiritual culture of the Vedas. Even from now, if members of the upper classes begin to feel for the masses and make provision not only for their intellectual education and material prosperity, but also for their spiritual culture and proper religious understanding, then only we can hope for a glorious future.

The keynote of the spiritual culture of the Vedas as embodied in the Vedanta or the *upanishads*, can very well be expressed in a few words: The ultimate reality of this universe is a spiritual principle, Brahman; the phenomenal aspect of the universe may have a relative or pragmatic value but is not an absolute verity; each individual soul is in essence of that divine spiritual principle and the growth or evolution of life lies in the progressive realization of that potential divinity of man through his clear intellectual understanding and conscious ethical behaviour in the society. In short, the spiritual culture of the Vedas meant the awakening of the spiritual consciousness in man which would evaluate things in the new light and bring about the redemption of man from bondages of material nature through love and service.

This spirit of Vedanta is in full accord with

the spirit of modern communism or socialism. Vedanta also affirms with great emphasis that all men and women are essentially equal and possess the same inherent right for the enjoyment of life. Any distinction among men brought about by race, colour or sex is only superficial and, therefore, not real. All men being essentially of the same spiritual principle, *atman*, must get equal opportunities for self-expression and also for the enjoyment of the goods of the world. In that sense a government must truly be of the people and for the people, even as it is envisaged in Red Russia. No one part or group of men should ever try to dominate over the rest for self-aggrandizement. The members of the government should consider themselves truly as servants of the people and not as their masters, as they do in India.

But there is a great difference in the fundamentals between the Vedantic outlook of the human society and that of communism. Whereas the latter tries to base its principles on the physical aspects of life, the former bases itself on the eternal spiritual verity of the *atman*. If we say that all men are equal purely from the physical or intellectual standpoint, then certainly it is far from the truth. All men are *not* equal, either physically or mentally. We all know that men, both individually and racially, are of different physical calibre and intellectual capacities. And for that very reason the strong and the intelligent always rule over the weak and the dullard. This is the law of nature on her physical side, the law of the jungle. Moreover, if we do not accept any spiritual basis of life or of Nature no other view of life can alter this law, as that will be false and unreal. So communism or socialism of any complexion that denies the spiritual verities of life and tries to base its pseudo-philosophy on a purely economical, social, or political basis, is bound to fail in the long run.

The real equality of man, nay, of all life,

is in the spiritual plane. It is because all men are of the same *atman*, that all moral codes enjoin the practice of certain virtues like non-injury, love, charity, and self-restraint. All ethical philosophers believe that our sense of the good, like our sense of the beautiful, is innate and fundamental, and the moral development of man must lie in the line of the progressive realization of the good. Vedanta identifies the good with the true and the beautiful, *Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram*. And it constitutes the very soul of ourselves. Hence we intuit its existence. Therefore, evidently it will be a false philosophy, if we try to base our moral principles purely upon economical or utilitarian basis, as that can never ennoble our moral nature or improve our moral character. Can utility improve our aesthetic sense? Obviously not. So also the utilitarian attitude cannot really improve our moral nature or refine our ethical sense. The greatest moral men of the world were saints and sages, and not politicians or businessmen. Hence it is a plain fact that men can never be made truly moral or ethical, unless they are taught to base their lives on spiritual truth and are disciplined by spiritual principles. Further, a society that is loose in moral disciplines and is cut away from ethical moorings, is bound to lapse into barbarity in the long run. So it is highly important for all social leaders to have a clear understanding of the fundamental basis of human society and human life as well. It is Vedanta that can afford a rational and satisfactory explanation of their fundamental basis. Therefore, in India the would-be communist must cease to seek guidance or inspiration from Moscow, rather, he should go back to the Upanishads for light and lead, and show to the world a new type of communism or socialism, which alone can save humanity from lapsing back to barbarity. And thus our shudras also can be brahminized and saved.



## A BACKWARD GLANCE AT PRABUDDHA BHARATA'S FIFTY VOLUMES

By ST. NIHAL SINGH

(Continued)

### 4. *The Power-house of Our Culture*

Not till a few years ago did I realize, with any degree of adequacy, the relationship that exists between Father Himalaya and our culture. This dawning came to me while I was voyaging through the heavens arching over *Uttarakhanda*—the sacred region of the north. I was going about in an aeroplane lent me by an acquaintance. 'Pushpak' (floweret or flowerlike), I called it, in memory of the air-chariot that had brought Sri Ramachandra back home from Lanka after he had freed it from the tyranny of the blood-bibbing ogres.

During the three days I was up in the air (in, to me, a wholly new sense) the matted locks of the motherland's mighty guardsman and I were near as never before. If I were only to break the glass through which I peered seemingly simultaneously at sky and earth, and put out my hand, my finger-tips would, I felt, be purified for ever by touch, however fugitive, with one of his snow-strewn strands.

One look at the rock-ribbed springs and streams down, down below that finally emerge as *Ganga Mai* from Rama's last stop on earth—Deoprayag (originally Devaprayaga)—and I understood, in all their poetic imagery, a series of hoary traditions concerning the celestial river's first century (or, according to another version, first millennium) upon earth. This she spent going round and round Lord Shiva's dishevelled, ash-smeared locks. Why did the fabricator of that fancy proclaim that she ever quitted them? There she was, still

wandering among them. So, at least, it seemed to me flying up in the heavens.

Crag and crest, vale and down, tarn and lake, pine-clad shelf, ledge and rolling heights, lying a thousand or maybe five thousand and more feet above fields of all shapes and at all angles, had I seen in many parts of the world. The ever-changing prospect in the inner Himalyan region exerted, however, a tug at my heart that that heart never experienced elsewhere.

Here, to the physical beauty, was added spiritual splendour. This combination was matchless—magical.

In other parts of the world man had striven to steal power that Nature has concealed in water. This he had done to cater for creature comforts.

Here man had studied the life history of a drop of moisture. He became cognizant of its ascent heavenwards—ascent real, though invisible to the eye—even the eye illumined by science. He had perceived that same drop, divested of all pollution, falling upon the earth and fructifying it. That cycle had continued—ceaslessly.

So man, snuggled in one or another of Himalaya's multitudinous laps, had applied to the superphysical the lesson he had learnt from the physical. Studying the arts and sciences of exalting the imperishable being within him, he had manufactured for that purpose an unending variety of hoists. Each of them was fitted with the power of propulsion that operated without external motivation.

\* \* \* \* \*  
As the summer rains of 1898 were drench-

ing the heights known as Almora, the hillmen living on that Himalyan range were witnessing a sight such as had never before been vouchsafed them or their forbears. Up the cart-road, still primitive, were being borne, from the nearest railhead, numerous packing cases. Strapped to the back by ropes slung athwart his forehead, each of them was being conveyed by a short but sturdy carrier to an estate that had just come under the occupation of a Sahib and his mem (short for 'ma'am', itself diminutive for 'madam').

There, when opened, the case was yielding masses of tiny sticks of lead. One end of each was crested with a letter of the English alphabet, or some other mystic sign or symbol. Or mayhap the packing case was found to contain a roller that bore marks of having been used for inking type, or some part of a printing-press.

A person possessed of some experience of the use that civilized man makes of such objects would have shouted :

'What madness, this! Who but a lunatic would think (is "think" really the word?) of setting up a printing-press in this remote spot? Judging from the number of boxes and cases, it is, moreover, going to be an establishment of some size.'

'What can be the object behind that endeavour? Hardly one in a hundred thousand persons or thereabouts could tell one English letter apart from another. Who, then, was to benefit from such activity? Who ever heard of such madness?'

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Such a brain wave could have originated only with a man of the Swami Vivekananda's perceptions and daring. Who else could have found men with the material resources and spiritual enthusiasms to help him to establish a printing establishment in that remote place? This was to be, in fact, a small part of the equipment for a cultural power-house in the heart of the Himalayas.

Given the leader, a cycle is soon compressed in the East, slow-moving in alien sight, into a semester. Hardly had the ink

on the notice suspending the publication of the *Prabuddha Bharata* magazine *sine die* dried in Madras, in June 1898, when the press had been transported from the steaming plains of that presidency to these cool heights, nearly 1,500 miles distant, by rail and road; and work on the August number was in hand. Compositors were setting up 'copy' turned out mostly by men clad in the sanyasi's ochre-coloured robes. Soon, sticks and galleys were being proofed; proofs were being revised; the corrections were being made; pages were being locked into forms; forms were being made fast in the press and inked; hillmen were turning the handle; off were coming printed pages; the binders were stacking pages in correct sequence and sewing them; and each finished copy was being wrapped, addressed, and posted to some town in India, or maybe in the United States, or Canada, or Britain.

An almond-coloured slip inserted between the greeny cover and the first page expressed the publisher's regrets for the delay in getting out the first number of the (revivified) *Prabuddha Bharata* and the 'bad printing'. These, he explained, were 'the unavoidable' consequences 'of having to bring up the press and materials from the plains', mostly in far-away Madras, to 'a height of about 6,000 feet above the sea level and then' rushing 'inexperienced hands with the work'.

To me, with my schoolboy's toe already upon the journalistic ladder, this explanation seemed gratuitous. For that time (August 1898) the printing was not at all bad. Examining that issue (No. 1 of Vol. III) today, almost exactly forty-seven years later, I am of the opinion that the men who carried out the Swami's behest to produce the magazine from this newly established Himalyan power-house of culture performed almost a miracle.

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I attribute this miracle to

- (1) Vivekananda's inspiring leadership, his burning enthusiasm, and sleepless vigil;

- (2) his unerring judgement of human values;
- (3) his free recognition of Indian weaknesses; and
- (4) his freedom from colour and race bias in choosing helpers to enable our people to become self-sufficing.

The two persons who, between them, bore the brunt of this transition, were an English-woman and her husband—Mrs. C. E. and Captain J. H. Sevier. Their beings had been cast in materialism bred in modern industrialism, but they felt within them an irresistible impulse towards spiritual development. Some one in their social circle had carried to them, in the spring of 1898, tidings of an 'Indian Yogi' who was dis- coursing, in faultless, fluent English, upon the ways conducive to self-realization, in a fashionable London drawing-room. Thither they speeded. As they were departing after the talk rather than lecture, the wife (women are often more intuitive than men) said, 'This is the guide for whom we have been searching; his is the path—the path of monism (*advaita*)—that we have been seeking'. Assenting, the husband replied, in a tone of finality, 'Now the quest is over'.

In no time at all a strangely complex relationship was formed. In matters pertaining to the spirit, Vivekananda was the *gnosta*—the illuminated—the enlightened—therefore, the guide or guru, to borrow a term from the most ancient of all civilized speeches. In matters pertaining to physical welfare, he was, nevertheless, the Seviers' child, mature in years and wisdom, but utterly wanting in the rudiments of husbanding his physical resources. If some one did not intervene, he, through extravagance of the most bankrupting kind, would soon consume that grand body given him by Nature—a body that, strangely enough, he himself had sedulously cultivated by exercise during his boyhood and early manhood years.

Never before had a good woman been led by her maternal instincts to assume an obligation that called for such ceaseless vigilance and drew upon the art and science

of management, quite to the degree that Mrs. Sevier had been. In the purely personal sphere the Master could be—was often, in fact—unmanageable.

Captain Sevier was, however, always at hand—always, that is, till the call came to him in the inner recesses of the Himalayas to step across the threshold invisible to the unillumined eye leading into a world that to that eye is completely hidden. The father in him strove, in conjunction with his wife, to save the Swami's body as long as possible from premature destruction—to save him for the sake of India and of humanity as a whole.

\* \* \*

Sevier it was who largely executed the Master's design to shift what I call the cultural power-house some fifty miles further into the Himalayan recesses. The elevation to be chosen was to be about 7,000 feet above the sea level. There even mortal frames conceived in cold latitudes could thrive. There bodies ushered into existence in our own India would, when acclimatized, function with vitality and vigour hardly possible upon the furnace-like plains.

Vivekananda's ideal was 'global'—universal. While he wished to uplift his own countrymen—to make them the equals of any and all nationals—he also desired to silence that miserable refrain :

Oh, East is East and West is West  
And never the twain shall meet.

Himself a universalist, he was bent upon building up a brotherhood—a sisterhood—of the two, created as one by Providence but sundered by man's own perversity.

The Swami had himself searched the hills further to the north-west, at whose feet I was born, for a likely spot for locating this cultural centre. While on his way to Murree, he tarried, in fact, for a spell, at the garden-house of a distant kinsman of mine—Sardar Sujjan Singh, who used the wealth he had acquired to build institutions essential for the promotion of social welfare. Much to my regret, however, this quest in those particular Himalayan ranges, proved infructuous.

Far from well at the time, the Swami decided to leave that job to the Seviers. To them he gave, as a guide, one of his beloved and trusted disciples—the Swami Swarupananda.

Swarupananda had but recently been initiated into the Ramakrishna Order, founded by Vivekananda for the purpose of serving Mother India's sons and daughters in health, ailment, and epidemic, in conditions of poverty and plague—to them normal—and, on occasions, when the very forces of nature seemed to be leagued together to destroy them, their houses and their cattle. These sanyasis—neither 'monk', nor 'mendicant' is an apposite translation of this Sanskrit term—were also to labour for the good of humanity outside India, particularly by carrying to peoples in both hemispheres the spiritual heritage that is ours merely by birth in this land blessed by saints and sages from the beginning of time.

Swarupananda-to-be had at first taken to journalism. The *Dawn* that he edited from Calcutta indicated the direction in which his mind ran—the longing for a new material, social, and spiritual order. It was a fitting prelude to the service that was in store for him in Himalaya. As we shall soon see, in his hand was placed the loose end of the rope with which was rung the tocsin designed by Vivekananda to awaken India.

Between them Captain and Mrs. Sevier and Swarupananda discovered a parcel of land at an elevation of 6,800 feet. Situated some fifty miles east of Almora—then the end of the cart-road and now the motor-road terminus—it was heavily wooded. Framed in trees were wide, uninterrupted views of Father Himalaya's eternally ermine-clad head and shoulders.

The way to the estate lay through high forest. It went up the mountain side and down to the trough through which sped torrents during the rainy season.

Without waiting for the Swami's sanction, the Seviers bought the estate in March 1899, and executed the necessary deeds. Ratifying the choice, he named the place Mayavati

and appointed it the nerve-centre of the Advaita Ashrama.

Here is Vivekananda's own explanation of the aims this cultural power-house was meant to serve :

In Whom is the Universe, Who is in the Universe, Who is the Universe, In Whom is the Soul, Who is the Soul, Who is the Soul of man, knowing Him, and therefore the Universe, as our Self, alone extinguishes all fear, brings an end to misery, and leads to infinite freedom. Wherever there has been expansion in love or progress in well-being of individuals or numbers, it has been through the perception, realization and the practicalization of the Eternal Truth,—the *Oneness of All Beings*. 'Dependence is misery. Independence is happiness.' The Advaita is the only system which gives unto man complete possession of himself, takes off all dependence and its associated superstitions, thus making us brave to suffer, brave to do, and in the long run attain to Absolute Freedom.

Hitherto it has not been possible to preach this Noble Truth entirely free from the settings of dualistic weakness; this alone, we are convinced, explains why it has not been operative and useful to mankind at large.

To give this ONE TRUTH a freer and fuller scope in elevating the lives of individuals and leavening the mass of mankind, we start this Advaita Ashrama on the Himalayan heights, the land of its first expression.

Here it is hoped to keep Advaita free from all superstitions and weakening contaminations. Here will be taught and practised nothing but the Doctrine of Unity, pure and simple; and though in entire sympathy with all the other systems, this Ashrama is dedicated to Advaita and Advaita alone.

To Mayavati were soon shifted the *Prabuddha Bharata* offices. The editor, since B. R. Rajam Iyer's departure, always a figure in ochre-hued robes, has had his eyrie there ever since. There his assistants have resided in summer coolness and winter frost. There the editorials and other notes, reviews, and notices of books have been written; and the articles commissioned or sent in from the outside have been examined and, wherever necessary, edited.

Till 1924 the printing was done there. While the circulation expanded, however, the communications remained primitive. In that year it was decided, therefore, to transfer the physical production of the magazine to Calcutta. Its intellectual, moral, and spiritual circuit has, nevertheless, continued to begin and to close in that cultural power-house in the inner Almora Himalaya.

(To be continued)

## ASIA AND EUROPE

BY DR. DHIRENDA N. ROY, M.A., PH. D.

The attitude with which the European people used to deal with the people of Asia during the first millennium of the Christian era or before was, highly respectful and appreciative. The East was then not as large as the whole continent of Asia itself. It stood then only for that portion of south-western corner of Asia which was contiguous to southern Europe. Geographically it was quite appropriate as any world map will show, on the part of Europe, particularly southern Europe, to call this portion of land East. By East was meant, as the Old Testament tells us, the countries east of Canaan or modern Palestine. These were the ancient lands of Babylonia, Persia, Arabia, and India. The early Christians of Europe used to feel deeply inspired by the very thought of this East which, according to them, was inhabited by the magi or wise men of the time. Up to the period of the Middle Ages they always entertained a lofty view of everything associated with it. When the most devout of these Christians known as the Crusaders came successively in huge swarms to wage their holy wars against the Saracens and saw, with their own eyes, what formerly appeared to them like fairy-tales, which if true, would make any land as good as paradise, the incredible splendour and prosperity of the East, their old feeling of admiration and reverence was further intensified. Those Europeans who were living at home heard from the returning Crusaders of things about the East they could hardly imagine. It had almost a maddening effect upon the people of Europe, stimulating their adventurous spirit to the highest degree. All talked about the East. Many were fired with the zeal of visiting the wonderful land and seeing its splendour and prosperity. There was, however, at that time, no easy means of communication with the East. The

caravan traffic by way of the Syrian desert, which was the usual means, often involved great risks to travellers who might any time become victims of organized brigandage. Nevertheless, their zeal for travel did not suffer the least abatement. They came and saw the East, those who succeeded in braving the perils of the journey, and were convinced.

But one thing happened. They saw in the East not the proverbial magi of whose profound wisdom and erudition they had heard so much. The East was rightly next to the holy land of Canaan in its holiness as well as being sanctified as the birth-place of these Biblical wise men. But they forgot all about them, their eyes being literally dazzled by the immeasurable luxuries and splendour amidst which they saw the people live. They saw the East in the new light, and thought no more of its wisdom. Wealth of the East took its place and became a temptation. Greed came inevitably and they got busy to devise means of sharing something of it. Rapid rise of trade and commerce between them followed and they began to have the taste of the Orient's wealth. Naturally the appetite grew, being whetted by newer and finer importations. But the problem of traffic was too baffling for them to get it duly satisfied. The routes were often blocked by freebooters who exacted a heavy toll on the business or mercilessly attacked the traders. Sometimes these routes were closed altogether and new routes had to be searched for. They must have some routes anyhow to carry the precious goods to Europe, and be happy and prosperous. It was the only thing which completely obsessed their mind and soul. The East came to be known as an immense storehouse of incomparably useful goods for material comfort and enjoyment. It was

not the wise people of the East but its rich possessions that evoked their strongest interest. Good-bye to the wisdom of the east and all hail to its wealth and splendour! This naturally involved a change in their attitude towards the people of the East whom their incipient greed required to treat differently to simplify the otherwise none too easy process of deprivation and satisfaction.

The East began to expand with the expansion of their trade and commerce. The trade that was more or less confined to the Mesopotamian hinterland and Arabia where, along with the local products, were also available multitudes of precious Indian goods of excellent quality, only provided fresh incentives to reach India for direct business contact. But the Arabs who had then the supreme control over both the caravan and the sea-going routes did not prove helpful to that end as it went contrary to their own business interest. They closed the routes to India against the European traders. So the latter began searching for new routes.

Meanwhile the Christian missionaries from Europe, in course of their wide travel for holy evangelical propagation, had seen and reported to their people at home the wealth of India,—the wealth before which what they had hitherto seen and admired in the Near East was but a pale and meagre side-show. Coupled with this the great Jesuit Father Marco Polo brought on a new stupendous thrill of joy to the West by his discovery of the glorious land of Cathay or China. His report about the wealth and splendour of this marvellous country was by no means less sensational to the West than what it had seen and heard of India. China, however, had hitherto been almost an unknown land to Europeans owing to the absence of any trade relation similar to what existed between India and Europe. The story of her immense wealth was no doubt very exciting to Europeans, but she was still a far too hazy land to the latter and hence comparatively less coveted than India. India remained their highest attraction. By the East was still meant chiefly India. How to reach that

blessed land was the most dominant idea that prevailed in the fifteenth century Europe. A series of explorations began for new routes to India. Some sought the north-west passage along the Arctic shores of Siberia, some by way of the Caspian Sea, and some again by way of the great Atlantic. They were prepared even to circumnavigate the world for a sea-route to India and thus to circumvent the clever Arabs who stood in their way. The great adventures of Dias, Covilhao, Columbus, Cabot, Vasco da Gama, Magellan, Jenkinson, Frobisher, and many others were undertaken with that one single object in view,—a new route to India. In course of their long perilous exploration, whenever some new land was discovered it was taken for India. That was how the group of islands in the Atlantic which Columbus first saw in course of his exploration got its name West Indies and how the inhabitants of America came to be known as Indians. Similarly, the inhabitants of the group of islands which Magellan discovered in the Pacific and which was given the name of the Philippines after the then Spanish king, Philip II, received the name of *Indios* or Indians. Columbus, of course, discovered, in course of his search for India, a new continent for Europe, but unfortunately, he died ignorant of the fact that he had done so. 'He believed', says H. G. Wells, 'to the day of his death, that he had sailed round the world to Asia'. Magellan was killed by an *Indio* before he could know that the Philippines did not form a part of India. Neither of them succeeded in reaching this most coveted land. But it was the great Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama who finally succeeded in discovering a sea-route to India by way of the South African coast and returned triumphantly after thirty-two months with a letter from a Hindu king, as a positive proof of his grand exploratory achievement,—a letter which was written on a golden leaf gladly welcoming the stranger. That was a great occasion, a red-letter day to the Portuguese people, nay the whole of Europe, for wild rejoicing. 'That night', says

Winwood Reade in his illustrious book *The Martyrdom of Man*, 'all the houses of Lisbon were illuminated; the gutters ran with wine; the skies for miles round were reddened with the light of bonfires'.

As direct and close contact with India became thus possible the boundaries of the East also began to recede. Formerly India was known only by her western region with which the Arabs had their trade relation, and to Europe by the East was meant more or less hazily as far as there. A fuller knowledge of the size of India through close contact made the East become larger in European conception. It became immensely larger still with the addition of the vast land of China which too gradually began to rouse the interest of the European adventurers as the missionary reports of her unlimited wealth and the easy opportunity to grab it reached Europe. Similarly the other countries of north-eastern and eastern Asia came one after another to be included in the East. Even the numerous large and small islands stretching southward like a sort of long disjoined chain of lands and forming the dividing line between the Indian Ocean and the great Pacific were included. Many more islands again lying in the vast space of the southern Pacific began to be mentioned in connection with the various peoples of Asia. Such peoples as the Polynesians and the Melanesians who inhabit these islands suggest by their very names their social kinship with Asia. Had not Australia, with the neighbouring South-sea islands under its sway, become a land of the whites it might have remained known along with the East, thereby making it appear more like a part of it than otherwise.

Thus the little East, which originally was rightly called so by its immediate West, a mere part of southern Europe, and which once stood for only such countries of Asia as Persia, Arabia, and India has been made to stand for the whole of Asia not excluding even its far-flung island stretches in the South and in the farther east. Its legitimate boundaries disappeared as more and more

beautiful and prosperous lands inhabited by yet stranger peoples, each possessing its own peculiar culture and civilization, were gradually revealed through it to the West, opening up greater and yet greater opportunities for exploitation. By the East was meant land of wealth and splendour, land of golden opportunities. Wherever these were found by the European adventurers, in course of their search for more and more, there was the East. Thus the East grew up to be identified with the whole of Asia.

The West had also undergone a similar, though perhaps not simultaneous, process of expansion. It originally meant that small portion of southern Europe which fostered a conglomerate tradition of Hebrew-Romanic influences. By this portion was meant chiefly such countries as Italy, Spain and Portugal. All the earliest historical personages who sought adventures into the blessed East belonged to these countries. They were first to penetrate into the East and press farther on and on while making their huge piles for home. Others on the north and north-east of Europe got scent of this highly profitable adventure much later. Before the Anglo-Saxon people of the north could reach the shores of southern Asia the adventurers from Spain and Portugal, especially the Catholic missionaries who were always their brave associates if not fore-runners, had already known and entered far beyond the limits of greater India and had engaged themselves in their favourite business. They had already known not only China but even as far as Korea and Japan where they were making rapid headway in fulfilling their mission. So while by the West was still meant the coastal Latin countries of southern Europe, more especially the Italian and the Iberian peninsulas, the East had acquired almost the full size of Asia. The Anglo-Saxons came to know of this great East a little later, and the other racial groups from the rest of Europe knew of it later still. As the various racial groups from the different parts of Europe gradually developed, more or less, a uniform interest in this East, as they all were moved

by the same intense desire for its wealth and power, there soon appeared some sort of unity of spirit among them to make the sharply divided Europe feel as one under the common name of the West. 'It is only by contact with the East', says J. H. Nicholson in his *Remaking of Nations*, 'that the West has come to feel itself in any sense a unity'. Something like the idea of brothers-in-exploitation made Europe become the one great West. Rightly or wrongly this West is thus Europe's own making. This would have been a credit, a great achievement on the part of the various nations of Europe, if this unity was caused by a healthy motive. That it was not so requires little explanation. The superficial unity of Europe cannot conceal for long the sharp underlying differences among its various nations. The repercussions of such negative unity have caused Europe to plunge in periodical blood-baths culminating in the present terrible Armageddon. This is, of course, a most painful way of bringing about disillusionment. But it appears to be inevitable.

Whatever that might be in the case of the West growing up to be identical with the whole of Europe, and even more, it is certain that the East was not Asia's own making. The West made it so. Asia did not understand it. All throughout her long and glorious history she had carefully and silently nurtured in her bosom a rich variety of peoples, each possessing its own peculiar culture and civilization and recognizing and tolerating other people's differences. She did not understand the West imposing upon her various peoples and their civilizations one single name to be treated and judged together. She did not understand it because she did not realize the motive of the West before it was too late,—the motive with which the latter came to meet her. It became clear to her only when she found herself robbed of her glorious position in wealth and power, when she had become weak and helpless before the aggressive West. Failing to assert herself Asia accepted the position imposed upon her. She became the

East. All her different parts of the Land in the north, east, south, and west, all her different peoples, all her different civilizations became the East. The West said it so and it was so. Asia has thus become the East even to the Australians, the South Africans, and the Americans of both north and south, as the Westerners from Europe have settled in these distant regions of Earth. Their land positions might be quite different from one another to show their different directional relations with Asia, but still to all of them Asia is the East. The geographical anomaly cannot stand before the sombre decree of the West. And Asia is now not only the East to the West but to all, that is, to the north, to the south, and even to the East itself.

This extravagant expansion of the little East, originally in the south-west corner of Asia, in total disregard of the geographical anomaly involved therein represented only the whim of self-consciousness that was fast overtaking the manhood of Europe through its sordid acquisition of Asia's wealth and its cruel usurpation of power over her various civilized peoples. The East has since then been simply a matter of attitude rather than latitude and longitude.

That attitude has mellowed the apparent inconsistency of the part becoming the whole merely through the popular usage of ages. Asia is the East now for all, whether rightly or wrongly, it does not matter. Time has set that question aside. The glory that is East is the glory of the West; the rest of the world moves round it in spell-bound acquiescence. Asia is not the problem because it is a fact of geography, but the East is because it is not a fact. The East is a dream of an excessive desire,—a dream that has become an established reality through its role as a satisfier. The West is the desire and the East its source of satisfaction. Until and unless the desire dissolves the dream continues its pose of reality. Asia will still take time to shed her inglorious garb of the East. Even if the West is now showing signs of disintegration and dissolution under the hard and relentless impact of the two great world-wars there is

no immediate likelihood of the East shrinking back to its small and relative character. The world learns rather slowly to forget its long accustomed way. While it holds to that way one has to let Asia go by the name of the East, especially in her social, political,

and cultural bearings. The problem of our international relations, therefore, has to be discussed still in terms of the East and the West, much as one may dislike the anomaly and the implications in which Kipling was pleased to use them.

## FROM THE HIMALAYAS TO CAPE COMORIN

BY A WANDERER

*To wander is to get education.—Goethe*

Perched on an Ashrama in the Himalayas, I would very often be thinking wistfully of the Cape on the farthest corner of India. Cape Comorin—what a grand view does it command ! Standing on this Land's End of India you can see the three seas meet—the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Bay of Bengal. You can see from here the glorious sunrise and the enchanting sunset. And the temple at Cape Comorin, it is superb ! The image inside—the image of the Virgin Goddess—beggars all description ! These words in praise of Cape Comorin I had often heard, and they fired my susceptible imagination. I must see the Cape ! But many desires rise in our hearts, and they melt away automatically, for you cannot afford to run after the fulfilment of every desire. I thought this my desire to see the Cape also would subside as a law of nature. But nay, I was mistaken in this notion. For I found it was surging and swelling within myself, till it took a definite shape and was pressing me irresistibly for action. When your desires are strong, circumstances also come to your help. I found it particularly true in this case of mine. So, one day, I found myself moving from the north to the south—out on pilgrimage.

Going up and down the steep ascent and the deep descent for a few days, I found myself at a Railway Station at the foot of the Himalayas. Here you were amidst a

crowded medley of people—rushing, bustling, all in haste. And you met with so many persons in khaki uniform. Staying in the interior of the Himalayas, one did not exactly know how the world was going on. Here, for the first time, the thought forced itself on me what a great war had been raging in the world—its influence invading even the peace of the Himalayas ! This gave me a mild shock. I was quite happy in my Himalayan abode, would I be the same man in the whirlpool of the present world ? Some were telling me that travelling was very, very difficult nowadays and it was not wise for me to undertake the pilgrimage in these war times. I saw it advertised in many papers—"Travel only if you must". Was my pilgrimage so urgent a necessity that I could justify myself in defying all these warnings ? Yes, it was an absolute necessity with me. For it was a long-standing desire. An opportunity had opened up for its fulfilment. I must not falter. I must go.

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I was in the holy city of Benares—Benares, as old as the Vedic period, the spiritual capital of India and the seat of great God Vishwanath. But this time I found that centre of gravity of Benares had shifted to Nagwa—four miles away from the city proper—where a big sacrificial ceremony was being performed. Hundreds of persons were going to that place, and the topic of conversation everywhere related to that. Some said that the rite had been undertaken to bring about

'world peace'. Some said it was a part of propaganda for this and that! In order to bring peace to the war-weary world to have recourse to a sacrificial rite! and that in the year of grace 1945!—it was hard to believe. So there was enough room for conjecture, guess, and speculation. Though the subject of talk was the same, it was amusing to hear how different persons looked at the thing from different standpoints. As I went by a boat over the Ganges, to the venue of the sacrifice, I found many fellow-passengers warmed up with conversation. Some were discussing as to how many lakhs of rupees were being spent for the whole show, some criticizing the management for various acts of commission and omission, while one—a Brahmin priest—enumerating the gifts and presents the Brahmin priests would get. A Bengali young man, assuming on himself the responsibility of the nation's welfare, enthusiastically said, 'It is a folly that so much money should be spent on a religious show, for burning ghee! This is the reason why our country is in such a miserable condition.' He went on talking, talking, and monopolizing the whole conversation. It was evening. The sound of bells from various temples was coming across the waters. Many devotees were seated on the bank in prayer or in a prayerful mood. I wanted to be in tune with the atmosphere—so I was silent. But this garrulous young man wanted to drag me into the conversation, little knowing that I had no interest in the topics of his discussion. This fellow had no religious feeling, (perhaps) no national spirit, not even any aesthetic sense. To indulge in frothy talks when the whole atmosphere was gravitating towards Deeper Reality! I asked him, 'What is your occupation in life? Have you ever found any opportunity to put your ideas into practice?' Poor man! He did not understand why I asked this question. He went on talking, till he spent himself.

This sacrificial rite was a huge affair. A vast plot of ground was taken up and in it

were raised many pandals—big and small. In the day-time the vast ground looked like a sea of heads, at night it appeared like a fabled city. There were various functions. In one pandal, one hundred Brahmins were performing Vedic rites with scrupulous punctiliousness, in another one hundred Brahmins were reading the Gita. Similarly, there was arrangement for the reading of the Bhagavata, the Chandni, the Upanishads—in each function one hundred Brahmins took part. In some pandal one was reading and explaining the Ramayana of Tulsidas, and so on. There was arrangement also for lectures on different problems of Hinduism. Moving about the area, one could learn, if one would care, about Hinduism from the Vedic age right up to the present time when Hinduism has become synonymous with chaos, weakness, disorganization, and disintegration.

'I don't know,' I said to myself, 'if there is any causal connection between the performance of these rites and the descent of peace on earth, but this is true, the whole function will serve the purpose of a regular university to the visiting public. There is so much to learn and see here!'

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I was in Calcutta. But I regretfully found that to me this city had lost all its charm. At night there was black-out; and at day-time there was plenty of motor accidents. The streets were crowded, the tram-cars were packed with passengers standing up to the very door, and to get on board an omnibus, well, you had to risk your very limbs—there was so much rush. Why not sit indoors, and enjoy the sight of the crowds feverishly moving about? Well, to one accustomed to Himalayan silence, the noise all round was simply hellish. I longed to fly away as quickly as possible. But fate was against me; I fell ill. I passed my time in sick-bed, turning over the pages of the Guide and Time Table for different railways in South India.

Desires are the cause of unhappiness in a man's life, but desires carry within them the

seeds of their fulfilment. So one day I found myself starting for Madras, and got on board the train at Howrah. But ah, at the very start I had to encounter an unpleasant difficulty. The berth reserved for me was occupied by men with khaki uniforms—seated with confidence that they were 'immovable'. The attention of the railway people was drawn to this, and I was given to understand that they would get down at the next station.

My first halting station was Waltair. I expected that somebody would come to receive me at the station. But when I reached Waltair after about twenty-four hours' journey, I found there was none to welcome me! What a great joy it is to see a friend waiting at the station for you, when you are in a strange place! But when the situation is reverse the disappointment is proportionately much keener. Never mind! Here was an opportunity for adventure, which you could enjoy, if you took it in a right spirit. But my difficulty was, I did not know the full address of my host. So I was in a fix as to what to do. Even when your path is so much covered with mist that you see nothing but darkness in front, if you proceed, you find the track of the path and you can go on. Similar is the case in life. As you go on, some distance just in front becomes clear, though you cannot look far into the future. Hungry, weary, and jaded, I was out for an adventure to find the residence of my host.

As I started, I found no difficulty on my way. I reached my destination quite all right. My friend did not get my letter; hence he could not come to the station. But the warmth and affection with which I was received more than compensated the trouble I had to face, or I had imagined I would have to face.

Waltair is a health resort. It has very nice scenery—situated on the shore of the Bay of Bengal and with a cluster of hillocks scattered round about. Formerly, it was a university

town. Now the university was removed to a safer zone.

As I went about in the evening, I found a large crowd thronging in a place. 'What is there?'—I asked. 'There is a temple near by, and people have assembled to offer worship', I was told. It sounded strange to me that so many people—and they belonging to a town—should be eager to worship in a temple. Who says religion is decaying, and people have no interest in religion!

When you are in a city or a town—specially in richer quarters—you do not feel what amount of penury there is in the country. At Waltair, as I went a little out of the town, at once the picture of India in its naked reality appeared before my eyes—dilapidated houses, thatched roofs which could hardly protect the rooms inside from the sun or rains, emaciated faces, hungry looks, rickety children, and so on. These pictures I had seen in the Himalayan regions, and they were to be seen even here? What a vast country India is, and what a colossal poverty reigns from one end of it to the other? With so much resources, with so great scope for agricultural and industrial development, with so much man-power, why is India in a state of chronic famine? Who will answer this question? Who is anxious to solve this problem? Because you are too familiar with the scenes of poverty, you do not often feel the depth of degradation you are in. You are accustomed to them! You take them as a matter of course! When you read from blue books the figures that describe the economic condition of India, you cannot fully realize the actual condition. But when you travel from place to place and see the tragic aspect of poverty in India with your own eyes, you feel greatly pained.

A few miles from Waltair is an ancient place of pilgrimage—Simhachalam. It is situated on the summit of a hill. A road with one thousand steps is there to reach the top. As you reach the peak, you feel you are far, far away from the world—beyond the reach of its sordid struggle for material gains. Just the place for spiritual contem-

plation! People from distant places come here to spend a few hours in joy and bliss. A man was asking me, (knowing that I was in the Himalayas), 'Is it a fact that the greater the altitude of the place you live in, the higher the thoughts that spring up in your mind?' I bluntly denied the existence of any causal relation between altitude and the quality of human thought. But what doubt is there that if you are in good surroundings, the level of your thought is higher. So in India, wherever there is good scenery, there is a temple.

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From Waltair to Rajahmundry I travelled with a Government officer, a Hindu religious preacher and some military men—a strange medley. The religious preacher was an aggressive type of person in conversation. He was ever ready to talk and eager to find out a listener. Within a few minutes of my meeting him I learnt how many lectures he had given, on which subjects and at which places. In his enthusiasm to talk he did not know where his limit was. He discussed the utility of cinema in the matter of religious preaching and talked about the characteristics of different cultures. Then the conversation turned on the problem of education. The religious preacher made some feeble attempt to justify the utility of the present system of education in India, but the Government officer was emphatic in his assertion that the system of education in vogue in our country had done nothing but harm to our people—physically, intellectually, morally, and spiritually, and he was quoting profuse facts and figures. A terrible statement and indeed poor compliments to our educationists for the past 150 years! But the crux of the problem is, if the system is so bad, what is the way out? Why not change it? In this respect everyone has got his own pet ideas, and the opinions of no two persons agree. So every system follows its own law of evolution.

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One of the military men was a devout Christian and a very broad-minded one.

From education the topic turned to religion. Is the world growing more and more irreligious? What is the effect of war on religion? The military officer gave a new angle of vision. Because military people were every moment face to face with death, some of them at least thought of life in terms of high idealism. The man was sincere, it was a joy to talk with him. I felt sorry that such a nice man was harnessed to the machinery of killing people.

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I reached Rajahmundry in the evening. As I went from the railway station to the place of my lodging, I saw as many as three meetings attended by a pretty large number of eager people, and one of these meetings was specially for ladies and addressed by a woman speaker. I felt curious to know what they were, and learnt that they were weekly religious meetings—on the Gita, the Rama-yana, etc. This is the ancient method of religious education handed down to the present times. But they are dying away, or have become rare,—people showing more interest in sports and cinemas. So I was astonished to see three religious meetings within a distance of one furlong. Rajahmundry is an ancient town, and even in these days of modernity has been able to preserve some of its old traditions and culture.

Rajahmundry is situated on the bank of the Godavary—the sacred river which attracts large numbers of pilgrims from far and near. The next morning I visited the river. I was afraid to take a dip in the river like the usual pilgrims because I was not quite well. But I dared not defy the old tradition. So I touched the water, with compunction in my heart that I could not take bath. One might say, 'What is there in the bath in a river supposed to be sacred? Many persons take their daily bath in these rivers, apparently one does not see any change in their life. Then what is the practical utility as far as the inner development is concerned?' A river is considered to be holy because it has got hoary associations. In India, on the

banks of many rivers, saints lived and performed spiritual practices. As you go to those rivers, the memory of their past associations arises in your mind, and you feel elevated. If the memory does not spring up in your mind, and you do not feel a stirring in your hearts, perhaps mere external baths have no value. But what doubt is there that at least some people, at least at some time, feel an uplifting influence at these holy associations? The Ganges, the Indus, the Godavary, the Kavery, bring up a host of associations in the mind of a Hindu from one corner to the other of India. They have become part and parcel of Hindu Culture, as it were. Would you call this a superstition?

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The next place I halted at was a village on the way to Madras. Here I found a residential school where experiment was going on to evolve a better system of education. The boys got up early, had their bath, then prayers and devotional chantings, and lived under the watchful care of the teachers who lived with them. Here there was no caste system of birth or wealth—the rich and the poor, the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins—all lived together in an atmosphere of love and freedom. Every attempt was made to make the boys self-reliant, self-confident, morally and physically strong and bold. I liked this small institution, the more so because in place of the usual denunciation of the present system of education, here was an attempt, however imperfect, to remedy the evil. That was a practical step.

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I arrived at Madras. I was in this city for a period about twenty years back. So many places of importance were known to me. As such they did not excite my interest very keenly, but tangibly did I feel the embrace of their welcome as an old friend. That street, how many times had I not passed by at hot summer noons or cool winter evenings! That part of the town, the buildings, houses, trees—all were, as it were, speaking to me

though in silent words! I felt so glad to be in their midst again, just as a man finds delight in unexpectedly meeting a friend whom there was no chance to see again. But of all places the welcome of the long, sandy beach was warmest to me. My memory was linked up with events of twenty years back when I would pass evening after evening, sitting on the sands alone or in company, looking at the roaring waves, seeing the distant ships losing themselves in the indistinct horizon, or the fishermen braving the sea with their funny little boats. I sat again on the sands. But I was now twenty years older. My thoughts and outlook were now quite different from what they were then. Vainly did I attempt to identify myself with them. They came to my memory—at least some of them, but I found they were no longer mine! They did not stir my heart, they did not create enthusiasm in me, as fervently as they did at that period of my life. Had I grown better or worse?

I went to see a dispensary, a few miles off from the town, in a rural area. The dispensary had recently been started, and already it had become popular. The organizer had got great imagination in starting this noble work in a village where the need is naturally greater. I spent quite a long time in these quiet and beautiful surroundings. I watched the pale sun setting amongst the trees, beyond the vast stretch of open space. As I went about in the compound, an image under a tree in the distant corner attracted my attention. 'What is there? Why the image of a deity in such a place?' I was told that the ignorant village people would formerly commit nuisance in that place, and no amount of advice and persuasion was of any avail. So this image of Ganapati had been installed there, and now the villagers themselves kept this place clean and also offered incense before the deity every evening. I laughed and laughed at the clever stroke with which an irritating situation had been handled, and it brought home to me a great

lesson also : in India everything can easily be done through the help of religion !

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From Madras I gave a flying visit to Conjeeveram, the famous place of pilgrimage for Vaishnavas. The great *acharya* Ramanuja spent many years of his life here. The place had got many other sacred traditions. As you approached the temple through its long and broad road with the houses of Brahmins, priests, artisans on both sides, you could clearly see how a culture, a civilization grew round an important temple. Apart from their spiritual influence, temples in India had played a great part in building its civilization.

Unfortunately, I could not spend much time at this holy place, because I had to return that very day to Madras. Before I could absorb anything from this ancient place of civilization and culture, hoary with so many sacred traditions, I had to think of the return journey. This is one of the great disadvantages of speedy travel. In the past when there was no motor-car or railway, pilgrims would come on foot from a very, very long distance, all the way thinking of God. That itself was a great preparation for spiritual life. And when they would enter the temple, they would do so with great devotion chastened and intensified by the hardship on the way. Naturally they would reap great spiritual advantage by the pilgrimage. And now ?

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On the way to Bangalore from Madras I halted in a village for two nights. It was a refreshing experience to be in a village, after staying for some time in towns and cities. You can understand the people much better if you visit a village. In urban life everything is artificial and showy, in rural areas no barrier has been created between you and the people, so that you can see and study them with the utmost ease and joy. Unfortunately the curse of modern civilization has entered into many villages even and disturbed its innate peaceful atmosphere. Here in this

village through a road passed military traffic which was a constant reminder to the innocent villagers of what was going on in the outside world. What a great contrast was it between those people and the big leaders of the world who think of national life in terms of Nazism, Fascism, or even Democracy, and deluge the earth with human blood ! In this village there was an Ashrama, with two or three members, kept so neat and clean, symbolizing peace and beauty. As I went about I found a temple under construction—almost complete. 'What is that ?' I asked my companion. This temple was over the village deity whom the villagers loved and worshipped. The temple would cost a pretty large sum and the villagers had readily borne the expenses, money being collected through subscriptions. It was a beautiful temple with tastefully designed architecture. I was, at first, surprised to see that a temple like this could be designed and built in a village like this. But soon I could see that the villagers did not at all mind the cost because it satisfied one of their great needs—spiritual hunger.

Bangalore is a beautiful city with its nice buildings and well-planned gardens, parks, and avenues. Of all the places and institutions I saw at Bangalore, the Indian Institute of Science appealed to me most. It is a big institution with several departments for carrying out researches. War had naturally put in many obstacles and handicaps, but still the work was going on. The Institute of Science is a unique thing in India. The founder, Sir Dorabji Tata, must have a great imagination and vision to start this at a time when there was hardly any scope for research work in India. He is entitled to the gratitude of generations of scientists. As one saw the institution, one asked oneself in sadness, why only this one institution in a vast sub-continent like India ? Could not there be several such institutions ? If India was to compete with the foreign nations, she

needed great development in science and industry.

We had a look round. In some departments we were given an explanation in detail of the nature of the researches that were being carried on. Great must be the joy of the scientist who discovers, one after another, the secrets of nature and expands the frontier of knowledge. There has been much discussion about antagonism between science and religion. It is true that the object and scope of the two are different. But is there not one thing common? Workers in both fields are overwhelmed by the thought of the mysteries of nature—internal or external. A scientist and a religious man—both are seized with a desire of arriving at truths, and start on a lonely journey—sometime defying all established and accustomed beliefs and traditions. And sometime it may be that a scientist, overwhelmed with the mysteries of external nature will turn to the thought of unravelling the deeper mysteries of internal nature and ultimately discover the Truth of which the material world is but a reflection. Thus the one path may lead to the other.

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As I approached Mysore from Bangalore by the evening train, I found on my left side, at a distance, a hill illuminated with garlands of fire. I wondered what it was. On my inquiry, a fellow passenger said that it was the famous Chamundi Hill, crested with the temple of 'Chamundi', the Divine Mother and the adored deity of the royal household of Mysore. Those garlands of fire were the rows of electric lights with which the hillock holding the Mother's temple on its peak had been decorated.

Mysore is a city of profuse electric lights, good roads, and fine buildings. Electricity is very cheap here and has therefore played a great part in decorating the city. I heard that on Durserah and other festive occasions the whole city became ablaze with lights. With its well-planned buildings, parks, gardens, and broad roads, Mysore is one of the most picturesque cities in India. Of

course 'Bangaloreans' will say that their city is as beautiful as Mysore, but I am afraid the verdict of a visitor will go in favour of the latter. As I admired the beauty of the city, my guide and companion said, 'Yes, it is beautiful, but at the expense of the poor tax-payers, and the money has been drained from the whole state to decorate a particular town.' 'Why should you look at everything from a socialistic standpoint?' I replied, 'Is there not a definite place for beauty in our life? If money has been spent on beautifying their capital, the people of Mysore have good reason to be proud of that.' As a matter of fact, it seemed to me that every citizen was co-operating with the scheme and trying his best to make Mysore the most beautiful place in the country.

I visited the Chamundi Hill, which commands a kaleidoscopic view of the whole of Mysore as also of its neighbourhood, and saw the palace, art gallery, public library, university building, St. Philomela church, and some other places of interest. One evening I went to see the 'Kannambadi dam', about which I had heard so much. More than the dam, which attracts large numbers of visitors, is 'Brindaban', a spot near the dam. It is a beautifully laid out and well-kept garden with many fountains which spout forth water in different shapes which, in turn, are illuminated by gorgeous electric lights in various colours. At night the whole garden looks like a fairy place. One who conceived this plan surely had the imagination of a Mogul emperor combined with modern tastes. As far as human endeavour is concerned, it has become a highly admirable thing. But can anything conceived by human brains and carried out by mortal hands approach the spontaneous beauty of nature? I heard that an American visitor, on seeing this beauty spot, remarked, 'It is beautiful, but a second sunset would have been more welcome'. To her the beauty of a sunset far surpassed any artificial creation of the human mind! Yes, it is true, man cannot compete with his

Maker, but still there will always be the creative effort of a human being. Therein lies his joy and fulfilment of personality.

In Mysore I met with an old professor, a deep student of Vedanta philosophy and a great lover of Hinduism. He is all admiration for Hindu philosophy. 'If Hindu philosophy is so lofty, why is the Hindu society in such a degraded condition?' I asked him—half seriously, half in fun. He quoted Gita and said that the Hindus had not followed their philosophy into action. According to him the main message of the Gita was action. But people tried to see in it the gospel of

devotion or the philosophy of knowledge, so they did not become vigorous in activity, and a degenerate society was the result.

There have been endless discussions as to whether the ultimate teaching of the Gita is action, or devotion, or knowledge, and no final decision has been arrived at. Perhaps there will always remain enough room for controversy in this vexed question. But there is no doubt about the fact that 'action' must at least be a means to a higher end. And few people have taken care of the means. The result is talk, talk, talk, and a barren philosophy.

(To be continued)

## TECHNO-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS

BY PROF. BENOY KUMAR SARKAR

Every techno-economic system is being constantly transformed or revolutionized by doses or degrees. A *qualitative* industrial revolution is the permanent feature of every economy, ancient, medieval, or modern. It is the changes in the methods, processes, or materials of production and transportation that constitute the qualitative revolution in the techno-economic morphology. But not every qualitative revolution is a revolution quantitatively considered. It is only when these changes affect very large percentages of the population in a region that a revolution worth the name may be said to be consummated. It has then become a *quantitative revolution*. In order to be convinced of the phenomenon of an industrial revolution, strictly so called, we should have to be profoundly impressed by high economic indices per capita and per square mile of territory. The changes must be massive in quantity and variety.

So far as the U. K. is concerned, we may conclude the final stages of the first industrial

revolution about 1830-50. The year 1850 is arbitrarily chosen in order to get a convenient date for conspicuous transformations of large masses of English men and women. The revolution may be taken to have started about 1785 or, say, 1750-85. In questions of such dates arbitrariness may hardly be avoided.

1850 may be taken to be the starting point of a new series of transformations. Technocratic inventions and scientific discoveries on the one hand as well as legal, political, and social changes on the other have since then been acquiring a powerful momentum in British towns and villages. Perhaps c 1940 the British economy has arrived at such a stage that compared to 1850 it registers an almost complete and totalitarian revolution. The U. K. 1940 *vis-a-vis* the U. K. 1850 may be taken to represent the same doses, degrees or grades of transformation as the U.K. 1850 *vis-a-vis* the U.K. 1750. The convenient category, 'second industrial revolution' (Industrial Revolution II), is then being

employed while summing up in one word the totality of all changes since the middle of the nineteenth century.

Economic life is continuous. The continuity—although with breaks, deviations, and ups and downs—has to be traced back to the Palaeolithic and still older times. The British economy of the period 1750-1850 is, therefore, still perceptible in the period 1850-1940. The distinctive characteristics of the second industrial revolution have evolved and grown by doses and degrees. The slow, tentative, evolutionary processes in the building up of this revolution can never be lost sight of. It should not be reasonable to dogmatize about a particular invention or patent as the only mark of the revolution or a particular date as the greatest single landmark in the entire scheme. We have to visualize legion of inventions and discoveries—small, medium and large—in the life history of every economic enterprise as well as in the total *Gestalt* of every economy. The techno-economic and socio-political pattern or configuration of Industrial Revolution II may be taken to have been established in its main features on the somewhat general scale by the beginning of the present century, say, c. 1905.

It is only for England that we are fixing 1850 as the date of the total consummation of the first industrial revolution (Industrial Revolution I). For Germany, France, and other countries, other dates may be found. The transformations can be watched, enumerated, and analysed enterprise by enterprise. They belong to the history of inventions and discoveries.

It must be emphasized at the same time that no political situation, howsoever favourable or adverse, can ever eliminate, cut short, or do without the processes or methods of techno-economic change. No economic enterprise—agricultural, industrial or commercial—can possibly skip over the different stages in the transformation in order to proceed from the sphere of the first industrial revolution to that of the second. New regions like Australia, New Zealand, etc., may

start on a clean slate at the latest stage of world economy. But their subsequent developments cannot but repeat the stages manifesting themselves elsewhere.

The only thing that can be somewhat curtailed is the period of time required in the mastery of the processes. Once in a while,—taking an extreme case (e.g. Soviet Russia)—the work of a whole generation may perhaps be accomplished in three to five years provided a very large number of men are enabled to set themselves to work with the support of a huge organization. The processes may be hastened but cannot be dispensed with. To what extent the human material, i.e. the intelligence, morale, inventive faculty, discipline, and personality of men, women, and children can be genuinely transformed in three to five years is, however, an open question. The influence of warfares, political revolutions, freedom, democracy, socialism, communism, and so forth on techno-economic morphology is no doubt considerable. But it cannot be taken to be the sole determinant. A very large part of the industrial transformation or revolution is determined by the condition of agriculture, manufacture, and commerce at the given time as well as by the intellectual, moral, and social personality of the individuals or groups in question.

### *The Morphology of Industrial Revolution II*

In the table of equations Germany was way behind England in 1850. But by 1905 the Anglo-German parity was established. Without attempting to analyse all the enterprises and all the inventions, discoveries, or patents, we may then point out some of the distinctive marks of Industrial Revolution II,—as widely established about 1905 both in England and Germany,—in the form of a table as follows:

#### *I. Agricultural Economy*

1. Land-legislation: the 'small holding' or family farm, replacing the large landed estate, latifundia or zemindari.
2. Fertilizers: the application of bio-chemistry to cultivation.

3. Mechanization (Tractors).
4. Fodder industry and animal husbandry acquiring prominence.
5. Co-operative credit. Land Mortgage Banks.

**II. Manufactural or Industrial Economy**

1. Coal: (a) increased use and improvement of safety devices; (b) mechanization ('rationalization').
2. Hydro-electric developments rendering industry independent of coal.
3. Oil as fuel.
4. Iron and Steel. The Bessemer and Thomas-Gilchrist processes introduce a new epoch in metallurgy. The elimination of phosphorus from iron ores.
5. Textiles: Automatic loom in the cotton industry.
6. Aluminium industry assuming a preponderant position.
7. Chemicals: Artificial products or synthetic substitutes (*Ersatzprodukte*). Indigo and dye-stuffs, rayon (silk), cotton, wool, rubber, petrol, etc. being created in the laboratory. 'Manufacture' of raw materials. 'Plastics.'
8. 'Rationalization.' Super-machinism. Intensive and extensive employment of important tools and machines economizing human labour on a phenomenal scale. The Age of 'Machine-Tools'.
9. *Produktionsmittel* (instruments of manufacture), producers' goods, technical appliances, *biens d'investissement* (investment goods), etc. differentiating themselves from consumption-goods and acquiring the upper hand in the industrial economy.

### **III. Commercial Economy.**

1. Transportation: (a) The railway age in the ascendant; (b) Automobiles introducing the problem of roads versus railways; (c) Aeroplanes; (d) Steam replacing sails in shipping, in its turn being replaced by oil (Diesel motors).
2. Banks: Amalgamation, concentration, fusion, or merger of credit institutions serving to establish capitalistic uniformity and monopoly.

3. Insurance,—life, fire, marine, etc.—growing into a substantial factor of the capital market and the business world.
4. Currency: Note-banks centralized and stabilized. Gold standard in its pure gold-exchange and gold-bullion varieties. Exchange Equalization Fund.
5. Business organization: (a) Limited liability principle helping forward the democratization and expansion of capitalism; (b) Cartellization in marketing, supply of raw materials, price-fixing, etc. (c) Trustification.
6. 'Rationalization' ('scientific management') in administration, finance, and other aspects of industry and trade.
7. World economy, 'Interdependence' of the two hemispheres through exports and imports. Emigration and immigration. International capital market.

### **IV. Social Economy**

1. Labour protection and welfare legislation through Factory and Mining Acts (control of capitalists and employers).
2. Trade Unions: (a) Armed with legal privileges; (b) Fortified with collective bargaining.
3. Social Insurance (Security) in all its branches: sickness, maternity, accident, old age, invalidity, unemployment.

Redistribution of national income through compulsory state-organized insurance or state-directed charities and doles. Inequalities and inequities of the wage system somewhat counteracted by such government activities with the support of taxes paid by richer classes. Neo-capitalism. Neo-socialism.

4. Public Health Act. Extirpation and control of diseases.
5. Decrease of death-rate. Diminution of infant mortality. Increase in the expectation of life.
6. Birth-control (international birth strike) being replaced by anti-birth-control (large family) movement. The menace of depopulation replacing the scare of over-population.
7. Increased consumption of wheat and

high-class cereals, meat, milk, fruits, sugar, etc. by poorer and lower classes.

8. Shorter hours, better conditions of work, healthier housing, higher real wages, recreation facilities for the masses.

9. Universal literacy. Vocational guidance. Adult education.

#### *V. Political Economy.*

1. Etatization, socialization, state control, or socialism in every economic sphere (agricultural, industrial, commercial, and social).

2. Free trade being replaced and/or modified by fair trade, protection, preferential tariff, customs union, currency union, autar-chism.

3. Public finance being dominated by progressive direct taxation (income-tax, death duties, super-taxes, excess profit taxes, etc.) and helping forward the redistribution of national income among diverse classes, i.e. the transfer of wealth from the richer to the poorer groups.

4. State regulation of output and prices by Marketing and other Acts.

5. Communism or abolition of private capital and wealth (partial or total) differentiating itself from socialism. (The only example, for the time being, is Soviet Russia.)

6. Socialism differentiating itself from communism and becoming an integral feature of traditional *bourgeois* capitalism. Neo-capitalism.

7. Economic planning in two forms : (a) Communistic ; (b) Non-communistic, i.e. socialistic (or *bourgeois* capitalistic).

As regards the origins of these latest features of techno-economic morphology, it is worth while to observe that not all of them are as old as 1850 even for England. Some of them belong to the eighties of the last century. But most of them were well established and diffused among large sections of the English, German, and American peoples by 1905. The pattern of Industrial Revolution I must not be understood to be a simple structure of homogeneous, organic, and simul-

taneously introduced items. Between one invention and another there was, very often, an interval of decades, sometimes of a generation. The economic morphology of Industrial Revolution II today (1940-44) appears to exhibit features such as are mutually dependent and involve or imply one another as a matter of course in an economic ecology. These items—technocratic, financial, and organizational as well as socio-legal—function simultaneously and inevitably alongside of one another. And yet each item, mark, organ, or feature of this economy has been often introduced independently of the others and at diverse intervals. Thousands of new techno-economic patents and medico-surgical inventions are being utilized in daily life during the war of 1939. Their impacts on Industrial Revolution II will serve to transform the economic morphology in a manner incomprehensible to the situation at 1905.

Backward economics like those of India, China, the Balkan Complex, Latin America, etc. have indeed been touched by most of the marks of the second industrial revolution as indicated in the above schedule. And yet Industrial Revolution II cannot be said to be the distinguishing feature of these economics because *per head of population and per square mile of territory* India and her techno-economic peers cannot exhibit high indices of these marks.

There is no predestination or determinism in *arthik unnati* (economic progress). Only, the creative choice of ends and means will always have to orientate itself to the 'duties that lie nearest these'. The moral for backward economics is obvious.

#### *The Role of Inventions and Discoveries*

In the dose-by-dose and grade-by-grade evolution of every industrial revolution we have to look for a multiplicity of forces and conditions. But no force is more creative and no circumstances are more compelling than the force of inventions and discoveries and the milieu calculated to promote scientific research and technological investigations. For backwards as for go-aheads one of the

greatest problems today and tomorrow is in most essential particulars the problem of inventions and discoveries.

The socio-economic pattern of an industrial revolution does not give prominence to the mere ability of a people to consume or utilize machineries, tools, and implements, or the actual consumption and utilization of these goods. The chief feature of this pattern consists in the people's capacity for inventing, producing and manufacturing these *Produktionsmittel, biens d'investissement*, investment goods or producers' goods. The spirituality involved in techno-scientific inventions and discoveries is the greatest single constituent of *l'elan vital* that ushers into existence the second industrial revolution as the first.

With imported inventions and discoveries and under the guidance of foreign inventors and discoverers a backward economy can rise

upto a certain level in industrialism, technocracy, culture, and socio-economic efficiency. But all this remains somewhat unacculturated and partially unassimilated to its own original and primitive conditions. It must be capable of producing and giving training to *Swadeshi*, indigenous or national scientists and technologists in order that it may leave an address in the world of economics, culture, and politics. Industrialism, technocracy, capitalism, or socialism cannot become its own spiritual goods until and unless these are created by its *Swadeshi* intellectuals and researchers, business organizers, and leaders of men. One of the greatest lags between a backward economy and a go-ahead economy during the epoch of Industrial Revolution II as that of Industrial Revolution I, is the lag relating to the quality, quantity, and variety of inventors and discoverers.

## IDEALS AND METHODS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

By SWAMI LOKESWARANANDA

In any plan of national reconstruction education must occupy the first place. For, more than anything else, it is education that can solve a nation's problems. Lenin knew this very well. So one of the first things he did after capturing power in Russia was to reorganize education. Stalin also is fully sensible of the vital part that education plays in a nation's life. He is ever watchful that the right kind of education is imparted in Soviet schools and colleges and that it never languishes for want of support and encouragement. Indeed nothing is so potent a factor in moulding a nation—its aims and aspirations, its outlook, its beliefs, its methods—as education. Today the mad fanaticism of the youthful Nazis is causing a headache to the allied leaders. And what is it that has bred this fanaticism in them? It is their peculiar brand of education.

In Russia the revolution has been successful, chiefly because through education people have been taught the socialist ideal and have been convinced that the order based on it is the best. If the leaders had neglected giving proper education to the people, it is doubtful if the revolution would have succeeded.

Again in Russia most costly experiments have been carried out since the revolution involving tremendous suffering and hardship to the people. But the people have not protested. They have patiently borne everything and, what is more, given most willing co-operation to ensure that the experiments may succeed. Their high sense of duty and loyalty to the state is indeed remarkable. But this, too, is the product of their education.

Every one knows that the Russian nation is composed of heterogeneous elements. There are different races with different backgrounds of culture and religion. In some cases even

languages are different. Ordinarily unity among such diverse elements is considered impossible. But in Soviet Russia unity has been accomplished. All the different elements have been so closely knit together that to the outside world they present the appearance of one solid unit. They are one in purpose, one in outlook, one in life's joys and sorrows. Nothing seems to be able to break their solidarity. Even the great impact of the present war has not been able to break it. They are fighting like one man, united in their common resolve to defeat the common enemy. There is no traitor, no Quisling among them. This is remarkable even for a country where such diversity does not exist. But what is the secret of this solidarity? Whatever else there may be, undoubtedly education is one of the main factors that have helped to forge this unity. It is education that has taught them to forget their narrow sectional interests and to keep in the forefront the larger interests of the country.

Few countries today can boast of such an alert, enlightened and disciplined people as Soviet Russia. Behind all her breath-taking successes in this war lies the voluntary contribution, in sacrifice and effort, of her men and women. The power behind the blow which halted the Nazi forces in their sweeping onrush and then, made them fall back, stunned and reeling, was the power that came from the simple common folks of Russia. Today the whole civilized world stands amazed at their performance. But, as is well known, they have not been like this always. Only thirty years ago they were weak, hungry, ignorant and helpless. They were in as wretched a condition as the Indians are today. But what is it that has brought about this change? Largely, education. Swami Vivekananda used to speak of man-making education. The Russians have had that kind of education. Through education they have been taught to feel that they are *men*. Through education they have been taught to respect themselves. Education has made them conscious of the dignity

of life, conscious of their strength, their rights, their duties. And by education they have acquired faith in themselves and in their destinies.

It is clear India, too, being akin to Russia in many respects, needs some such education: an education that will inspire her people, give them courage and strength, hope and joy, faith in themselves, and a readiness to face life with its many trials. And it is clear, too, that it is only national education, *i.e.*, education based on national ideals that can do that. At the moment so many plans are being advocated for her regeneration. Some concern her industries, some her agriculture, some her social life. There are plans concerning her education, too. There is the famous Wardha scheme, for instance. There is the Sargent scheme, also. None of these plans is perhaps completely satisfying. But each represents a new outlook, a new approach; each has many commendable features and marks a definite advance. So far no plan has been finally accepted. Discussions are still going on on the subject. The moment is, therefore, appropriate for a consideration of what may be regarded as the ideals of national education in India. It is good to be reminded of them again and again, lest in a hurry, in the confusion which controversies often create, we lose sight of those ideals and accept a wrong plan. More than a hundred years ago Macaulay devised a plan for the education of Indian youths. It was a plan far removed from the Indian ideals of education. It was a plan conceived in racial arrogance and in complete ignorance of Indian history. It is surprising that the plan was accepted at all. It is still more surprising that the plan has been allowed to continue for all these generations. The consequences that have followed from this have been, generally speaking, most pernicious. It has hindered the country's progress rather than help it. It has created new problems, new difficulties and has not solved the old ones. It has produced a new aristocracy of the educated and has widened the gulf between them and the uneducated

more than ever. The blunder was that the plan was not thoroughly examined before it was accepted. There was too much hurry, too much confusion. That it fell far short of the essential requirement, that it was divorced from the national ideals was not grasped. Such a blunder must not be committed again. No plan shall be accepted which is not in keeping with the national ideals, which is not informed with the best in the national traditions.

What are India's national ideals? From time immemorial India's national ideals have been not political or commercial but spiritual. It is in spirituality that her genius has excelled most. To her the highest thing has been, and is even now, the attainment of spiritual excellence. To realize God—that is the ambition of every one of her children. Life to them is not for grabbing sense-pleasures. It is for realizing God. And everyone must strive to that end. True, the ideal is very high and not many are able to live up to it. Still it is there. There can be no compromise about it. The ideal must not be lowered. Even for the weak, for the most despicable, that is the ideal. It is for all. And the surprising fact is no one disowns it. No one says he is not going to attain the ideal. Of course he will take time but ultimately he must attain it. He is not going to stop short of the final goal.

This is the fundamental ideal before India. For good or ill, it is there. It has been her cherished ideal for centuries. She lives for it and for it alone. It is the only thing that matters to her. She has suffered incredibly during the past ages. She has been plundered and robbed. She has been reviled and ridiculed. But through all the vicissitudes of life she has stuck to the ideal. She has not given it up because she cannot. It is her life-blood. To give it up will be fatal to her. It will be fatal to the rest of the world, too. Was it a mistake for her to choose such an ideal? Maybe, it was. But it is too late now to give it up. It must remain the central thing in her life and all her life must be ordered and governed by it. There is no

help for it. But was it a mistake for her to choose this ideal? There are people who will say, 'yes.' They think too much stress on spirituality has been India's undoing. For, according to them, it encourages men to run away from life, to neglect all its duties and to look upon all mundane affairs of life with contempt. But the ideal, if correctly understood, does not do anything of the kind. It never encourages men to run away from life, for, according to it, life is an opportunity which must be properly utilized for spiritual progress and its duties are the means by which that progress can be attained. To Indians, therefore, the importance of life and its duties is all the greater. There can be no question of neglecting or despising them. In India, in fact, there is nothing one can neglect or despise. One can only transcend. There is, therefore, nothing wrong with the ideal. The wrong is with the Indians themselves, for they have not lived up to it. Let them begin a vigorous practice of the ideal. Then, the apathy which has seized the nation and is responsible for all its miseries, will go and there will be, then, a happier, a rejuvenated India.

It may be asked: Is not this ideal of God-realization irrelevant in this age? The world is not as it used to be once. It has changed very much during the past one century. And it is daily changing. Now man has different needs, different aspirations. God-realization is an ideal of inaction, of idle dreams, of vain pursuits. This cannot suit him any longer. He believes in action now. And he wants realities—things he can possess and make use of. He cannot be content with dreams only. What use has he, therefore, for this sort of ideal? Is not the ideal altogether out of place in this age?

No, not at all. It is still relevant, still valid. It is more so now than ever before. It may be the world has changed. It may be, too, man has progressed in certain directions. But fundamentally he remains the same. The real art of life he has not yet learnt. And he is as unhappy as ever. His power, his knowledge, his material possessions

—all these have become a mockery to him. He does not know their right use. And they are often causes of terrific carnages which he cannot stop. He is indeed a very pathetic figure. The fact is spiritually he has not progressed at all. He remains the same brute swayed by passions as centuries ago. To rectify this he must make his spiritual progress square with his material progress. Herein comes the necessity for the ideal of God-realization. For it is only by increasing devotion to this ideal that man can evolve into a finer and nobler spiritual being. There can be, therefore, no question but that the ideal is relevant.

## II

From the earliest times India has recognized two kinds of knowledge: *para* and *apara* (spiritual and secular). The former leads to God, to liberation; the latter to earthly enjoyments, to bondage. Obviously one is higher than the other. All are enjoined to pursue spiritual knowledge, if possible. The qualifying clause—if possible—is to be noted. It is not intended that all must pursue spiritual knowledge, for that is not possible. It is recognized that the vast majority hanker after earthly enjoyments and they must have them. So arrangements are made that they may have secular knowledge. In India the most pleasing fact is that there is no attempt to force all to follow one common track. Instead each man is allowed to have his way according to his inclinations. In fact he is specifically told to follow his inclinations. It is his dharma and he must not go against it. So most men and women receive secular knowledge. But they are told that sooner or later they must overcome their hankering after earthly enjoyments and seek God. For that is the ultimate ideal and they must not lose sight of it. Again and again they are reminded that earthly enjoyments give no real happiness, no peace. Only God-realization can do that. So even in the matter of secular knowledge the ideal is kept in the forefront. The idea underlying education—in fact, every type of activity—is

to lead man step by step towards God-realization.

But how can secular knowledge be any help towards God-realization? The answer is, by proper application. In India the highest use that can be made of anything, material or spiritual, is to employ it in the service of fellow-beings. But service implies renunciation also. So in India whatever man does, his object should be: service and renunciation. Here life has been from the beginning not competitive but co-operative. Each individual has deemed it his duty to serve his community and to sacrifice for its sake. Here the king rules not for his own selfish ends but for the good of his subjects. He must use his power, his wealth, his everything in their service. He must not consider these his property. They are the property of his subjects and he is merely a trustee. Similarly the subjects also should obey the king and respect and support him. Thus between one man and another, between one social group and another the relation is one of service and renunciation. The relation is not enforced by law or by the power of guns. It is not enforced at all. It is voluntarily entered into by all, for through such relationship only they are nearer their goal—the goal of God-realization.

In secular knowledge also the object is: service and renunciation. You learn history, science, literature or whatever else it may be, so that you may be able to serve better, renounce more. If you do not employ your knowledge for the good of your community but for your selfish gains only, then, you are not doing your duty and you are moving away from God. But if you use your knowledge in the service of others and do so selflessly, then you are going nearer towards God.

But the most important thing to know is what is education. The Indian view of it is that it is a training, a discipline: a training which helps to unfold the full man, that brings out 'the perfection that is already in man.' It is, therefore, a training of the whole personality of man—his body, mind and soul.

According to this view nothing is got from outside. Everything is inside and it has got to be brought out. Its contrast with the present-day meaning of education is obvious. Today education largely means book-learning. It means merely stuffing the mind with some third-rate information. It is a jumble of pickings from all manner of desirable and undesirable sources. There is no assimilation. There is no real change in the character. Almost no part of the human personality is affected by it except the intellect. Today a so-called educated man may be found to be a knave, a man without any morals. What can be a greater condemnation of present-day education than this? This just shows that it fails to do even what is regarded as the primary function of education, e.g. character-building. We have now more education than ever before. Our depth as well as extent of knowledge is far greater than at any time in the past. Nevertheless we have more dishonest men among us now than before. And if statistics are taken, it may turn out that their number is larger among the educated than among the uneducated. It is all because education is lop-sided. Today it is considered enough education if a man has learnt a few things. To know a little bit of everything—that seems the hallmark of education. But mere knowledge is nothing. It must be backed by character. Too much stress on the intellect is a mistake. Of course it is an important part of man. It must be nourished, must be strengthened. In the process of man's education surely it plays a vital part. But it is not the whole of man. There are other parts equally important. They must have attention, too. Their neglect has resulted in the paradox of education without character.

In India, however, education has always meant character-building. Scholarship by itself has little value to the Indian mind. Its value comes if only it helps to transform character. Character—that is the first and last thing in Indian education. If education does not evolve a sound and healthy

character, then it is no education. Because such a high premium is set on character in India, in the past the rule was that only men of exemplary character should be teachers. For it is through the influence of high characters that character is best formed. Today, however, any one who has obtained a few university degrees is qualified to teach. His character hardly counts. At the most it is a secondary matter. But in ancient India it was insisted that the teacher must be a man of God-realization or at least near about that. The rule that 'example is better than precept' was first practised in India. For most of the teaching in ancient India was done through the personal example of the teacher. His life, his habits—all these moulded the character of the student. The student was constantly with the teacher and his influence was the most decisive factor in shaping him. He learned mostly through living contact with the teacher and not through the mechanical reading of books as at present. Now there is hardly any contact between the teacher and the taught. And the little contact that there is is often marred by lack of sympathy, love and understanding on each side. Previously the teacher was like father to the student. He would not only look after the intellectual and spiritual needs of the student. He would also feed and clothe him. The student, in his turn, would render personal service to the teacher and love and respect him as a son. The relations between them were absolutely cordial. And they would last till the end of their lives. Education can produce character where there are such teachers and their relations with their students are such.

As has already been said, India does not regard book-learning as education. She knows its limitations too well. Of course she does not despise it. Surely it has its use. For instance, it brings the mind in contact with new thoughts, new ideas. And these thoughts and ideas suggest new lines of development for the character. But they do not avail unless the will is properly trained. The head may be seething with ideas. What

good is it if there is no strength of will to translate them into practice? The will must play its part if the ideas are to become action, if they are to be assimilated to the character. So it is important to train the will. And in India it is considered the function of education to do that.

In ancient India great stress was laid on concentration of the mind, for by concentration the faculties of the mind are strengthened. And learning becomes easier when that happens. Like concentration several other practices were enjoined. The idea in each case was to discipline the body and the mind so that they could be used as helpful instruments. India believes there are infinite powers latent in man. These powers have to be awakened and made use of. And it is the business of education to help in their awakening. But education as it is now does quite the contrary. It definitely thwarts the awakening of a child's latent powers. This is because the system is such that the child is forced to depend upon its teachers and books and to keep its own powers in abeyance. The idea seems to be that the child's education is impossible without their help. But this was not the view in ancient India. Teachers and books were never considered the primary thing. The primary thing was the child and its powers. So from the beginning care was taken that the child had plenty of opportunity to use its powers. This made education not only easy but also pleasant to it. And this gave the child also self-confidence which is the first thing necessary in education as in life itself. The child never felt curbed and thwarted as it does now at every step. Now there are such fine books and such good teachers. There are such novel appliances also to facilitate education. Nevertheless the child learns mighty little. And how it hates to learn! Never did a child feel so bored and tired in learning as it does now. The reason is emphasis is put on the wrong thing. There is too much attention given to books and appliances whereas the child is almost ignored. This must be stopped. It is the

child that should have most of the attention. And that should be done not by checking it but giving it freedom and opportunity. It should be realized that the ideal condition is that in which the child educates itself, is its own teacher. That is what should be always aimed at. And that becomes possible where there is not too much interference with the child and it is left free to use its own powers.

Nowadays there is too much regimentation in education. A child has hardly any choice as to what it should learn or it should not. It is slave to a system which is unreasonable and cruel. It forces the child to learn things it hates to learn and does not allow it to learn what it longs to learn. But this is something foreign to the Indian idea of education. According to it, each individual should be given the option of his own subjects and allowed to concentrate on them. It does not believe in curbing his particular bent of mind. Instead it believes in encouraging it, giving it full play.

According to the Indian view true education must produce *shraddha*, faith in oneself—faith which would know no shaking despite a thousand failures. Such faith can do miracles. It can make a man do almost the impossible. At the root of all great achievements of man lies this faith. Backed by it man can show death-defying courage, superhuman endurance and an indomitable will. England has furnished an example of such faith in this war. Battered by enemy bombs night after night, suffering defeats in every theatre of war; subjected to incredible hardships for lack of amenities of life; distrusted and forsaken by friends and allies, she has stood alone facing the enemy, bold and determined, ready for further reverses of fortune but ready to strike back as well. Even in her darkest hour she did not lose faith in herself, did not doubt that she was going to win.

It is such faith that it should be the concern of education to produce. Judged by this standard present-day education in India must be considered a failure. Far from producing such faith it rather kills it, if there is any.

Scores of thousands of youths come out of schools and colleges every year with so-called education. And what are they like? They are the poorest specimens of humanity. They are weak both physically and mentally; they are full of pompous ideas borrowed at third-hand, which they do not understand and much less practise; they learn to talk glibly, for to them that is the byword of scholarship and intelligence; they are heroic in their declarations but are nowhere to be seen when action is called for; they are loud in their declamations against old values and old traditions but are the first to cling to them when the time comes for them to choose new ones. They do not dare to look life in the face. Appalled by its difficulties they run away from it and taking shelter under all kinds of high-sounding 'isms' try to conceal their ignominious retreat.

The fact is present-day education, in its methods as well as contents is too negative. It increases one's doubts and disbelief instead of helping to overcome them. Faith is possible when one is convinced of an ultimate which is permanent and unchangeable. And God is the only such ultimate. But now education is Godless, even anti-God. The result is man does not know what to hold on to. At various stages of his education he learns many new ideas and arguments. But man cannot be content with mere arguments and ideas. He wants a conviction. And conviction means a sense of reality, a grasp of the real. God who is the only reality being expelled from present-day education it cannot give this grasp of the real. The remedy is that God should be restored. Each student should be made conscious that there is a reality at the back of every phenomenon in this world and that reality is God Himself. Then only education will produce faith.

Another thing should be done: its methods should be improved. There is at present too much importance attached to text-books and examinations. The student dreads them like a nightmare. And in coping with them he makes himself a physical wreck and a moral coward. By all means this should be

stopped. The tyranny of text-books and examinations must end.

One other thing education should produce according to the Indian meaning of it: that is respect for man and everything concerning him. It will be seen how imperative this respect is for building up peace on sound lines. War and other anti-social activities will cease when there is this respect in every heart. In ancient India pupils were taught that man is essentially divine. This was not meant to be a matter for the mind to dwell upon in idle philosophical moments. This was a matter to be practised by everybody, every social group and in everyday life. But times have changed. Today the idea has become obscure and few believe in it and fewer still practise it. This is not a little responsible for all the conflicts and clashes that have crowded into the national life today.

It may be asked: Can all these ideals of education be practised today? In ancient India they were all right. But now conditions are different. For good or ill, the impact of the West has changed life altogether. Now life is much more complex than ever before. There are new problems, new duties, new demands. Can these be met by the old ideals and old methods of education? Does not the changed environment of the country require new ideals and new methods? Will it not be folly to cling to the old ones merely for the sake of sentiments? Moreover, there are many new ideas of education in the West. They have been tried and found very good. Why not adopt a few of them, too?

These are pertinent questions. But it is not true that the old ideals and methods have become useless. They all still hold good. However much the country may have changed, they still can be and must be applied. Of course it is conceivable that they will require readjustment here and there to be more suitable to modern needs. Perhaps in some cases the centre of emphasis will have to be shifted. In others, perhaps, some details will have to be rejected. But that

is all. Fundamentally they remain as good as ever. Further, they are a sort of corollary to the ideals to which the nation stands committed. So they cannot be changed. Also their soundness still remains unchallenged. As man's knowledge of psychology is progressing, many new theories and new methods of education are taking shape. Surprisingly enough, many of them bear a close resemblance to these old theories and methods of India. It is possible that with further knowledge of psychology and with more experience, more and more evidence will be available of the soundness of the Indian theories and methods.

But this is not to say that India has nothing to learn from the West or must not learn even if such learning is to her advantage. Whatever else may be her fault India is not conservative. So she shall

gladly adopt and assimilate whatever good there is in the West. Only she must be sure that it is not repugnant to the ideals for which she stands. At the moment the great need for her is to learn Western technology. By this her efficiency will increase—efficiency in production, in transport in everything. A synthesis of Western efficiency and Indian idealism—that is the ideal education for her or for any other country. One gives her prosperity, the other peace. Both are necessary and both must be obtained. Nowadays the tendency seems to be to overemphasize the second. True, India needs nothing so much now as relief from her poverty. But in the struggle to gain it let her not forget that peace is a higher thing and is indispensable. And to ensure that, she must stick to her national ideals and to her educational ideals, too.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

In this number the *Conversations with Swami Shivananda* are continued, and, as usual, will deeply interest many readers.... *Vedanta and Communism* exposes the weaknesses of Communism and shows the way to avoid them.... *Asia and Europe* is the second part of the highly illuminating article which the learned writer contributed to the Golden Jubilee Number of *Prabuddha Bharata* published in June.... *From the Himalayas to Cape Comorin* records the impressions of travel left on 'A Wanderer'; we are confident our readers will find much in the account that is not only interesting but instructive, for the 'Wanderer' hides beneath his anonymity a wealth of learning, worldly wisdom, and sympathy with the ideals of Indian life, born of deep spiritual insight.... Dr. Sarkar's articles are always original, informative, and interesting. *Techno-Economic Transformations* is no exception.... Swami Lokeshvara-nanda discusses the trends that should

operate in Education in *Ideals and Methods of National Education*.

### RELIGION AND MODERN LIFE

Man has always felt an innate urge for understanding the deeper problems of life. The 'practical man' continues his search for unmixed happiness in this material world, and is seldom discouraged by his repeated failures. But to accept the world as it is, as most practical men would advise us to do, would mean undergoing a lot of misery too. This is inevitable, for evil is as tangible an experience in life as good. Religion asks us to give up this life of duality—the good has to be given up along with the evil as they are not independent of each other. But the spread of scientific knowledge has aroused in man the unfounded apprehension that the remedy suggested by religion is negative and other-worldly. That religion is not a spent force but a positive faith essential to life and existence was stressed by Sir S. Radhakrishnan in a lecture delivered at Colombo some time ago. He said :

So long as there was a dream of another world, so long as there was the dream of a higher life which was the gift of nature to man, so long as that yearning for that realization was there, it was impossible for them to abolish religion altogether in this world. Neopaganism would never satisfy the impulse of man. Questions of what were to hope for and live for formed the make-up of the human mind, and it was impossible for them to stifle that metaphysical curiosity. Questions of their relations with their neighbours, their mutual influence on one another, were aspects of life which they could not get rid of. The provision of material comfort alone did not accomplish victory over evil. The mere question of humanism might help them to get on well for some time, but would not last for long.

The preoccupations of modern life leave little scope for introspection or cultivation of religious faith. It is the fashion for educated persons to talk disparagingly of religion. Intellectuals flatter themselves on being able to overcome the risk of succumbing to 'idleness, idolatry, and superstition' which only, to them, constitute religion. Religious dogmatism and fanaticism are largely responsible for this deplorable state of affairs. Sir Radhakrishnan said it was unfortunate that theologians and religious leaders were not able to impress on the modern mind the importance of real religion, but, instead, they cared for the immediate material interests. He deplored :

that today God was being used merely to justify whatever suited their convenience. They built empires and thanked God for them. That was how people were attempting to employ religion. The world today would be a better place to live in, perhaps, if they did not talk about religion too much, but lived it.

The vitality of a religion lies in the practice and realization of its ideals by its adherents. Spiritual experiences can be subjected to test by the scientific method. Vedanta offers the rational basis for a universal religion. But the moderner sneers at the ideas of 'God' and 'soul'. As Aldous Huxley remarks, current education, while discouraging any preoccupation with spirituality and mysticism, makes men and women enthusiastic devotees of some form of political or social idealism. This 'belief in, and worship of, human creation as though it were God,' is surprisingly common among persons who call themselves rational. And they fall an easy prey to the vagaries of their own passions and prejudices. As Sir Radhakrishnan

rightly pointed out, unless men realize God and through Him reach the unity and universality of the soul, the lower instincts and tendencies of man will continue to jeopardize the harmony of human relationships. In this connection he observed :

Men would never be satisfied with the satisfaction of material needs. Cases of suicide came more from the rich than the poor. Then what was the solution? Would it be possible to realize a life of uprightness and honesty because they commanded the conveniences of life? Would not jealousy continue to pollute the human relationship? Those were problems which could not be solved by mere scientific enlightenment or social control. Their solution transcended both these stages of development. The answer had been given by one of the great thinkers of the world who, according to the *upanishads*, told them that the answer to those questions lay in the acquisition of wisdom, which, in the words of the Buddha was 'enlightenment', in the words of Jesus 'truth' which 'shall make you free'. They reached that stage in meditation, when, away from intellectual pursuits, away from the operations of the body and mind, they touched the apex of their soul, that supreme kind of awareness when they got glimpses into eternity. (*Ceylon Daily News*)

#### FREEDOM ESSENTIAL FOR EDUCATION

The essential need of freedom, political and economic, for the success of any national scheme of education was emphasized by Dr. Radha Binod Pal in his illuminating address to the annual convocation of the Calcutta University.

Exhorting the graduates to prove themselves worthy of the education they have received by contributing their best towards the attainment of freedom, he observed :

No task is more sacred than to be able to help the motherland to come into her own, and I myself and your country expect that your education will make you pre-eminently fit for this task from which you will never flinch, however heavy the pressure of odds.... Your education will fail of its chief object if it has failed to train your intellect, emotion, and will to healthy and harmonious action.

It is common knowledge that the educated youth of today has a tendency to fall a victim to cheap imitation of alien political and economic shibboleths. We are glad to find that Dr. Pal has drawn the pointed attention of our educated boys and girls to 'the common frailty of being carried away by mouth-filling slogans of the moment'.

I hope the light that radiates from your Alma Mater will help you to discriminate the genuine from the spurious, that the education you have received at her

hand will instil into you an adequate knowledge of the forces which shape the destiny of your nation and will prevent you from being an easy prey, in crisis, of any loudly proclaimed nostrum, quick to fall upon any one individual or group, to whom you may be persuaded to attribute all your ills.

Referring to educational reorganization in our country, the learned Doctor said that 'equality of human worth demands equality of educational opportunity to develop potentialities'. He was of the opinion that the new spirit in education must ensure 'genuine equality', which, in other words, meant security of the child against economic pressure, ill health, malnutrition, emotional disturbance, and aggression. At the same time he deprecated any blind imitation or uncritical appreciation of the foreign system of education obtaining in our country.

Every educational system being a reflector of the society for which it is devised and the existence of differences between English society and Indian being an acknowledged fact, no educational system for India should be blindly imitative of what is deemed suitable for England. At the same time, the worth of India's

children to India is no less than that of the children of any other nation in the world to that nation.

These bold words, coming from the vice-chancellor of a leading university, hit the right nail on the head. He was equally critical of the snobbery and false vanity of the present-day educated youth who, on leaving the university, finds little in common between himself and the masses.

It is a notorious fact that the educational system of today has everywhere worked as a most efficient safeguard of social stratification. The demand has, therefore, gone forth that steps should be taken to see that post-war education does not play this ugly role. This demand is of special value here, in India, and the rarest courage will be needed even to raise it. Its fulfilment will not be cheaply secured here, and I would like to see that we do not fail in courage and persistence till we secure its fulfilment. (*Hindusthan Standard*)

The efforts of Indian educationists to better adapt the educational system to the needs of the country will meet with greater success if and when India is able to free herself from foreign political and economic servitude. Dr. Pal hopes that happy day is not far off.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**STUDIES IN SRI AUROBINDO'S PHILOSOPHY.**  
By S. K. MAITRA. Published by Benares Hindu University, Benares. Pp. 160. Price Rs. 3.

Dr. Maitra, Head of the Department of Philosophy of the Benares Hindu University, is a great student of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. In these essays he has probed deeper into the philosophy of the Pondicherry saint.

'Sri Aurobindo and Bergson' is a penetrating study of the philosophy of the two thinkers. Dr. Maitra is of the opinion that Sri Aurobindo has made a greater contribution to philosophy than Bergson. Not only that, 'thanks to Sri Aurobindo, the leadership in philosophy which India had enjoyed in the past, and which she lost for some centuries, has come back to her.'

In the second essay, the learned professor has dealt exhaustively with the problem of the religion of the future. He discusses what he means by the religion of humanity, and makes this distinction clear by some pertinent remarks about the Ramakrishna Movement. He points out with penetrating insight that 'It would be a gross mistake to call the gospel of the service of man which was preached by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda, a religion of humanity.

It is something far higher than this, for the service of man, as preached by these great saints, is only a deduction from the more general principle of the imminence of God in the universe. It is because every human being (given by them the significant appellation *Narayanayana*) is, according to them, a visible manifestation of God, that service of man becomes synonymous for them with service of God. The whole fabric of the religion of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda rests upon an intense faith in the realization of God, and is as far removed from the religion of humanity as anything possibly could be.'

The author next discusses, in the same essay, what he calls the religion of mysticism or of individual realization as well as Tagore's 'Religion of Man'. Finally, he is of the opinion that the 'Religion of the Superman', as adumbrated by Sri Aurobindo, has a great future before it, nay, the future is only for it. The writer, in this essay 'Sri Aurobindo, the Superman', analyses Sri Aurobindo's conception of the 'Superman' and says much that will be difficult for the ordinary reader to grasp. Equally difficult, yet interesting, are the theories of cosmic evolution or ascent, the return of the spirit, as well as cosmic involution or

descent, 'the self-projection of the Spirit'. These theories predict that we are in the throes of another evolutionary leap due to the emergence of the 'Supermind'. '... for the Superman is the Being into whom the Supermind has descended, the Gnostic Being with the supramental consciousness. The descent of the Supermind, however, does not cause the emergence of an individual Superman, but a race of Supermen. And along with the emergence of a race of Supermen there is produced also a radical change in the whole nature of the universe, physical, vital, psychical, mental. In fact, the Superman cannot appear until matter, life, soul, and mind undergo a radical transformation.' In the *Yogasikha Upanishad* we get an idea of the Yogi changing his body into a divine body, and he is said to become master of his senses, mind, intellect, and *ahamkara* and enjoys the freedom to move about at will 'in all the three worlds.' (Vide shlokas 35 to 47). Sri Aurobindo, it would seem, envisages a cosmic evolutionary change, making possible the emergence of such Yogis, taking place sooner or later. '(The Superman) does not come merely as an individual but as a member of a higher race of beings.' Also 'each Superman would be different from the others, a unique formation of the Being, although one with all the rest in foundation of self and sense of oneness, and in the principle of his being.'

The difficulty with regard to all theories about God, the soul, and allied spiritual topics is that none of these are demonstrable by the ordinary processes of reason, and one has to take many things on a hypothetical basis until they are verified by personal experience. Swami Vivekananda says: 'There are much higher states of existence beyond reasoning. It is really beyond the intellect that the first state of religious life is to be found. When you step beyond thought and intellect and all reasoning, then you have made the first step towards God; and that is the beginning of life. What is ordinarily called life is but an embryo state.' (*Raja Yoga*). Sri Aurobindo also is a great believer in intuition and recognizes various grades in it. Dr. Maitra elucidates these points in 'Sri Aurobindo's Conception of Intuition'. He says, '... Sri Aurobindo, true to the traditions of our ancient systems of philosophy, has analysed intuition and classified the different kinds of it better than what most of the Western philosophers have done.'

In the same essay Dr. Maitra has tried ably to defend Sri Aurobindo's criticism of Shankara's Conception of *Maya*. Dr. Maitra says, 'It is true that he (Sri Aurobindo) has pointed out certain defects in Shankara's philosophy, the chief of which is, as he puts it, the refusal of the ascetic. But he has done so not for the

purpose of rejecting Advaita philosophy, but for the purpose of reconstructing it on lines...' Sri Aurobindo's standpoint is that of the *tantra* philosophy and it should be noted that Shankara in his *Brahma Sutra Bhashya* admits that he has no quarrel with the view that all is *fati* or consciousness. Logically speaking, we are all aware of the antithesis between light and darkness, truth and falsehood, विद्या and विद्युत्. Shankara's dialectical philosophy was based upon this natural contrast with which we are all familiar. As Sri Ramakrishna said, from the *jnani's* point of view the phenomenal world has no reality, but for the *bhakta* everything is real. But Shankara was not merely a dialectician, a mere *jnani*, he was also a great *bhakta*, and he recognized Brahman as equally true in its immanent aspect. We are constrained to remark that it would have been worthier of Sri Aurobindo if his criticism of the *Maya* theory had taken account of these facts, and if it had been couched in happier and less offensive language.

The essay on 'Sri Aurobindo and the Problem of Evil' shows Dr. Maitra at his best. He has thoroughly exposed the weaknesses of Western philosophers in this respect, and the almost stupid inconsistencies into which they are landed by their pointing of Satan, the All-Evil, as against God, the All-Good. It seems to us that it is the intellectual pride of Western scholars that stands in the way of their appreciating the Hindu solution of the problem of evil, and for pride there is no cure except what comes from repeated falls. We wish that Dr. Maitra instead of trying to placate the pride of Westerners had fearlessly stood his ground, as he himself says on p. 88. 'If history has taught us anything it is this, that if you want to win the respect of the world you must proclaim your views fearlessly.' For was it necessary or accurate to say that 'our own ancient view suffers from the defect that it does not take evil seriously? What can be a more emphatic expression of the seriousness of evil and the necessity of overcoming it than what is contained in the Gita verse, 'for the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of *dharma*, I come into being in every age?' The ancient view never was that evil is unreal in the sense that it does not at all exist. Only from the *jnani's* point of view can we say that evil is unreal, for the *jnani* recognizes only the नित्य, and not the सौन्दर्य. But the *vijnani*, the *bhakta*, recognizes both the नित्य and the सौन्दर्य. Evil is unreal only when you have risen above it into the region of Brahman; it is real enough at all other times; and the aim of all human endeavour is to go beyond all evil which leads to misery, for as Patanjali says, सर्वेष्य तुःस्ते विदेहमः।

On the whole, these essays have eminently served

the purpose the author had in mind, and would certainly rouse in the mind of the readers a desire to learn Sri Aurobindo's philosophy at first hand by a perusal of his books.

#### A CORRECTION

The number of pages of *I cannot die*, reviewed in the August issue, is 52.

### NEWS AND REPORTS

#### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, ALLAHABAD

##### REPORT FOR 1941-44

The report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Muthiganj, Allahabad, for the years 1941-44 has reached us. The efforts of the Sevashrama are mainly directed towards serving the body, mind, and soul. Accordingly it conducts a charitable outdoor dispensary, has opened a library and reading-room, and holds religious classes and discourses.

The outdoor dispensary treated the following numbers of new and repeated cases as noted against the corresponding year in each case:

Year	New	Repeated
1941	5,867	29,713
1942	6,102	24,406
1943	7,190	23,654
1944	7,211	29,454

During the Kumbha Mela in 1942, the Mission Sevashrama opened a temporary charitable dispensary for serving the pilgrims, and treated 1,332 cases.

The library and reading-room containing valuable books and various periodicals fulfilled a great need of the locality. The average daily attendance was between 18 and 22.

Religious classes were held regularly. Lectures were organized on special occasions, such as Hindu festivals, Christmas Day, and Buddha Day. In addition to these, the birth anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and some others were duly observed each year.

The monk-in-charge makes an appeal to the generous public for a donation of Rs. 20,000/- needed to repair the dispensary building, improve the sanitary arrangements of the Sevashrama, and expand the library and reading-room.

#### VEDANTA SOCIETY, SAN FRANCISCO

We have received the programme of work of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, San Francisco, for the month of May 1945. Of the bi-weekly lectures delivered during the month by the Swami-in-charge, mention may be made of the following: 'The Philosophy of Reincarnation', 'The Foundations of Peace', 'Can Man control his Destiny?', and 'The Secret of Successful Action'.

#### BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Towards the close of the distress relief work conducted by the Ramakrishna Mission in the districts of Dacca and Faridpur (in Bengal), the monastic workers of the Mission organized celebrations of the birthday anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda at different places in the rural areas of these districts. Special celebrations were held from 6th to 31st May 1945 and at the following places: Radikhal, Kalma, Umedpur, Longsing, and Haldia. The birthday celebrations were organized on a grand scale at each place, and consisted of processions, *kirtan*, special puja, and illuminating lectures and discourses on the lives and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and Holy Mother. A number of monks of the Belur Math took a leading part, assisted by the local devotees and admirers who evinced keen interest in making the celebrations a complete success.

#### A GIFT TO THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

Mrs. Himansu Bala Bhaduri, wife of Col. D. N. Bhaduri, I.M.S., has made a gift to the Ramakrishna Mission, of a large four-storied house, worth Rs. 1,50,000, situated at 111, Russa Road, Calcutta. This gift is made to perpetuate the memory of Devendranath Bhaduri, the only son of the donor, who died in England in 1943 when he was only 26 years of age. The gift will be called 'the Devendranath Bhaduri Memorial'.

In making this gift to the Ramakrishna Mission, Mrs. Bhaduri has stipulated that the memorial building shall be used solely for the purposes of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture which is at present situated at 4A, Wellington Square, Calcutta. The Institute of Culture stands for certain ideals which were very dear to the heart of Devendranath who was a keen student of Indian culture. It is therefore quite fitting that his memory should be honoured and perpetuated through the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture. This Institute has for its object the promotion and propagation in India and abroad of Indian culture in all its aspects. It also stands for the assimilation of all that is worthy and elevating in other cultures, and establishing cultural contacts with the peoples of different lands forms an essential feature of the Institute. We offer our heartiest congratulations to Mrs. Bhaduri for the magnificent gift she has made for such a noble cause.

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. L.

O C T O B E R, 1945

No. 10



“उत्तिष्ठत जाप्रत प्राप्य वराग्निबोधत ।”

“Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

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## CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI SHIVANANDA

The non-co-operation movement—Mahatma Gandhi and other nationalist leaders—Their self-sacrifice exemplary and praiseworthy—The Ramakrishna Mission—Its plan of work and service different from that of the nationalist leaders.

(Place : *Belur Monastery*. Time : *Monday, November 1922*)

At that time India was swept by the non-co-operation movement and numberless people were courting imprisonment. The whole country was awakened by Mahatma Gandhi's appeal. Men and women by thousands, who considered the motherland's political independence the highest ideal, were ready to dedicate their lives at her altar.

It was Monday. The evening service was just over at the chapel of the monastery at Belur and there was great silence all around. The sadhus (monks) and *brahmacharis* (novices) were engaged in devotions and meditations, while Swami Shivananda, absorbed in meditation, sat on a couch in his room. The dim light made his serene face the more serene and radiant. Time slipped away till at last the Swami began reciting Pushpadanta's hymn describing the glories of Shiva. His mind seemed steeped in the ocean of bliss.

Just then a devotee from Calcutta came

from the chapel, and after due obeisance to the Swami, sat on the floor. After a while Mahapurushji greeted him, affectionately saying, 'Is it K. ? When did you come ?' The devotee replied reverently, 'Yes, Maharaj, I arrived at the time of the evening service.'

Swami : 'I believe you were in the chapel all this time.'

Devotee : 'Yes, Maharaj.'

Swami : 'Tell me why you look so sad and worried. Are all well at home ?'

Devotee : 'Yes, Maharaj, by your blessing all are well, but for the past few days I have been mentally upset over a certain question. It has made me extremely unhappy. I am here with the idea of unburdening my heart to you. If you permit me I shall do so.'

Swami : 'Very well, tell me.'

The devotee spoke with great earnestness. He said : 'Maharaj, at this hour the whole country is stirred to its very depths by the

non-co-operation movement of Mahatma Gandhi. Countless men and women are rotting in jails. Many have already laid down their lives, and Mahatmaji himself also has plunged into the sea of danger. But why is the Ramakrishna Mission silent in this immense country-wide movement? Have not you any contribution to make? The entire nation is wondering at the ways of the Ramakrishna Mission. Has not the Mission some duty in this national struggle for freedom? Finally, in a tone of grievance, the devotee added: 'Do not you feel for the country at all? Are you powerless to do anything in the matter?'

Swami Shivananda's calm face assumed a serious aspect. After a while he broke the silence, saying: 'Well, K., the doings of a divine Incarnation are beyond the reach of the average intellect. How would you or the nation understand the way of divine action? When God embodies Himself as man, He does so for no particular race or nation, but for the good of the whole world. The manifestation, this time, is of the highest *sattvika* aspect of the Lord. The Incarnation, Sri Ramakrishna, is the embodiment of perfect *sattva*. Containing within himself all the six divine powers, he lived in the body assuming only pure *sattvika* moods. Consider the way he spent his entire life in a temple court on the bank of the Ganges. How would you understand the deep spiritual significance of all this?'

'It was in order to spread his *sattvika* spiritual thought that Sri Ramakrishna brought with him as his assistant such a powerful soul as Swami Vivekananda. Swamiji could certainly have stirred the country to political revolution, had he so chosen. Who is more patriotic than he was? How many hearts bleed for the downtrodden masses, as his did? Swamiji did not start a revolution. Had he known it would really help India, he would surely have done so.'

'Aside from Swami Vivekananda, even we, by the grace of the Lord, have such power within us that we can revolutionize the country if we so wish, but the Master would

not permit us to do so. He brought us here to assist him in his work and he is constantly leading us by the hand in all that we do for the good of the country and its people. Believe me when I say our only desire is to advance the good of the world. How can I explain to you the depth of our feeling for the miseries of the people? Only the Lord who dwells in every heart knows it.'

'Before passing out of his body, the Master vested his whole power and the responsibility of his mission in Swami Vivekananda. Only after travelling over the globe from one end to another and scrutinizing it closely did Swamiji found this Math and Mission to carry on activities beneficial to the world and particularly to India, according to the directions of the Master. One by one, Swamiji engaged us all in these activities. If we had so wished, we could very well have lived a life of exclusive contemplation and meditation in mountains and forests. As a matter of fact, most of us had been away from the monastery in different places, doing that to some extent. It was Swamiji who called us together and engaged us in works of service—the service of God in humanity. Even in our old age we are carrying on that work.'

Devotee: 'Maharaj, do you mean that Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders have not been doing genuine national service? Their unique spirit of service, fortitude, and sacrifice cannot be ignored. What great humiliation and persecution they are suffering for the sake of the country?'

Swami: 'No, I do not mean that. Their renunciation, fortitude, and national service are indeed very praiseworthy. Their lives are surely great and exemplary, and they have done much good for the country, working for what they sincerely believe to be beneficial to India. However, our plan of work is different. Do you know what we think of the nationalist leaders? They are doing these services inspired by certain particular thoughts of Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji. There is no doubt about it that

Mahatma Gandhi is really endowed with great powers. It is also true that there has been a special manifestation in him of the Primal Energy, the Mother of the universe. In the Bhagavad Gita, the Lord Sri Krishna said to Arjuna : "Whatever glorious, prosperous, or powerful being there is, know thou that he has sprung from a portion of My splendour." Whoever manifests special power and is held in high esteem and reverence by many, undoubtedly represents a special divine manifestation. The Mother of the universe who was wakened by Sri Ramakrishna for the good of the world is obviously working in various ways through the instrumentality of different persons. Many times in his lectures Swami Vivekananda stated what constitutes India's true well-being. Solutions he proposed for the regeneration of the country twenty-five or thirty years ago—the abolition of untouchability, the elevation of the depressed classes, the spread of education among the masses, and so on—are now being preached by Mahatma Gandhi.

"Though we may not voice our ideas and sentiments loudly in newspaper articles, we are actually accomplishing things, not through politics, but in our own way. Mahatmaji is working out similar ideas through politics. Just as we are doing things at home because we are interested in India's welfare, so we are doing things abroad because we are equally interested in other races and countries. Of course, in view of peculiar circumstances and conditions, our plan of activity varies in different places. Every monk of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission established by Swamiji is dedicated to the ideal "For one's own salvation and for the good of the world" and is engaged in service according to the injunctions of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda."

Devotee : 'But, Maharaj, the national awakening caused by the non-co-operation

movement of Mahatmaji would have received an added impetus if the Ramakrishna Math and Mission had co-operated with it. This opinion, far from being just my own, is held by many thoughtful people of the country. Why don't you co-operate with Mahatmaji in his national campaign ?'

Swami : 'Well, I told you at the outset that we are working in our own way in accordance with our own ideal—an ideal formulated and left us by the far-sighted sage Swami Vivekananda. Before his illumined vision was revealed the picture of the next thousand years, not merely of India, but of the entire world. He saw everything clearly and chalked out a definite policy for us to follow. He was not throwing stones in the dark. He could see even the distant future clearly.'

"The manifestation of divine power we see in Sri Ramakrishna in this age is unique. There has not been such a manifestation in many countries. The wave of spirituality will roll on unimpeded over all the world for a long time. This is just the beginning, the prelude. The spiritual sun which has appeared on the horizon of India will illumine the entire world with its undimmed pure rays. That is why Swamiji said, "This time India is the centre". Spiritual power will be manifested with India as the centre. Who can stem the tide of this divine power ? The regeneration of India is absolutely certain. India's advance in art, science, philosophy, and education—in every field, secular and spiritual—will be so great that it will astonish the world. Compared with her future achievement, her glorious past will pale into insignificance. Then you will realize why the Master and Swamiji came and how much they contributed to the well-being of India. What can the limited mind of man understand about the doings of those divine beings ? Don't you see that they have awakened the national *Kundalini* of India ?'

## SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE—I

BY THE EDITOR

*By merely repeating the name of the medicine for a disease one is not cured. One has to take the medicine. Similarly without direct realization, mere repetition of "God", "God" will not give salvation. (Shankaracharya).*

### I

Spiritual discipline is meant for the aspirant after God considered as the infinite source of all bliss. People generally adopt means suitable to the achievement of their ends. The spiritual aspirant has to do so likewise. There are, however, two classes of persons to whom spiritual discipline is unnecessary. To the first class belong the *siddhas*, the perfected sages, who have transcended the necessity for all discipline, who have risen above all laws, and are themselves the creators of laws for the guidance of others in the spiritual path. These great souls, calm and serene, have themselves crossed the terrible ocean of *samsara*, the world of becoming, and out of the infinite compassion of their hearts go on doing good to the world, like Nature in springtime. They are the beacon lights, the pole-star by which spiritual aspirants can steer their path safely through the hidden rocks to the haven of spiritual rest. To the second class, to whom spiritual discipline is unnecessary, belong the men, immersed in worldliness, who believe that this world alone is real, that there is no God or future life, and that death is the end of everything so far as the individual is concerned. To such people the need for spiritual discipline has not yet arisen; they are spiritually blind.

But the vast majority of men and women really desire to reach out to something better than a mere worldly life, and the problems of God and life after death do come up before them demanding a solution, even if it be a tentative solution, though only in rare moments in their busy life of work and enjoyment. Among the aspirants, then, we may distinguish two broad classes. In the first

group we may include all those who cling to this world and yet desire the help of God to enable them to get on well. To this class belong what the Gita calls the *arta*, the man in distress, and the *artharthi*, the penniless man praying for wealth. The second group consists of men who are tired of the apparent aimlessness and meaninglessness of all life, and want to get at the truth underlying all phenomena. These are the *jignasus* of the Gita.

Now all forms of ritualistic and external worship are meant primarily for the help and guidance of the first group. Temples, churches, and mosques, fasts, feasts, and festivities are the concrete, visible, tangible things that are necessary to guide and to hold their attention on things spiritual. Such things are the symbols, the direct outward expressions of the desire for going out beyond the confines of the world present to the senses to the vaster world of the spirit. These outward symbols act as constant reminders of the higher destiny that awaits the ordinary man. Pilgrimages, gifts, building of temples, and tanks, schools and hospitals, are some of the forms in which aspirants of this type want to express their efforts for realization of God.

### II

For the worldly man who has no belief in future life or God, the whole philosophy of life becomes based on *artha*, wealth, and *kama*, enjoyment. Believing that this single life is the only one vouchsafed to man on earth, they do not care for dharma. Might makes right, and there is no such thing as righteousness in human life for such people. They will make lavish promises to gain their

object, and break them all without the least scruple afterwards. As an Indian proverb says, 'When in need, you call your benefactor a god ; after that you call him a rogue. Such people help their friends, the people who agree with them in grabbing the wealth of the world for common enjoyment, and destroy ruthlessly all others, their enemies, who stand in the way of their ambitions for possession and enjoyment. In a word their life is based on *adharma*. Such people may be successful for a while in this world and be able to oppress many, but ultimately they sink into the greatest misery, and meet their inevitable doom. The 'Ravanas' of prehistoric and historical times illustrate by their colossal failures that the ultimate triumph of righteousness cannot be stopped by any one. World forces are moving in the direction of increased righteousness. As the *upanishads* say, *satyameva jayate nanritam*—truth alone triumphs, not untruth.

Human society has survived because, on the whole, it has been based on righteousness, natural love, and trust, and a desire to acquire even wealth and the means of enjoyment only in accordance with dharma, the principles of conduct which lead to spiritual development and immortal life. (*vide Gita : dharma-viruddho bhuteshu kamosmi bharatarshabha.*) No wonder, therefore, that it is only the highly moral nations, the nations that have consistently condemned violence and aggression, and have preached non-violence, brotherliness, and mutual co-operation that have persisted in enduring in the midst of terrible historical vicissitudes. Divine forces favour those nations that stand for righteousness, and if we read world history aright we may learn that human progress on true lines has been possible only when mankind, instead of relying on merely materials and weapons have learned to depend more upon the invisible sources of spiritual strength. The greatest leaders of mankind have always taught this truth. What Abraham Lincoln said to Americans is worth quoting here :

What constitutes the bulwark of our own liberty

and independence ? It is not our frowning battlements, our bristling sea-coasts, our army, and our navy. These are not our reliance against tyranny. All of these may be turned against us without making us weaker for the struggle. Our reliance is in the love of liberty which God has planted in us. Our defence is in the spirit which prized liberty as the heritage of all men, in all lands everywhere.

### III

But for the avatars, the *nityasiddhas* or ever-perfect souls, the *jivanmuktas* or the souls who have achieved spiritual emancipation by their own efforts in this very life, humanity would have stagnated at the animal level. No wonder, therefore, that the world has instinctively recognized that these great souls are the salt of the earth, and have learnt to value and live by their words and examples. These great liberated souls continue living in the world in order to help mankind. This is an empirical fact. It is innate in even the average human being to partake with others, out of sheer brotherliness, what he has got in abundance in the way of wealth or knowledge. A man cannot be happy by living merely unto himself. How much more so must great men who have gone beyond all selfishness be moved by the spirit of compassion and service of their fellow men ? Otherwise how can we explain the existence of thousands of godly men and women who sacrifice their lives in the service of God and humanity ? Biologists may say that it is but the transmuted paternal instinct that leads men to love and serve even those not of their blood. Supposing we grant the correctness of their argument, is not the altruistic and philanthropic spirit as far above the paternal instinct as man is above the beast ? What is it that makes man divine if not this all-embracing love not only for human beings but for all beings, a truth so eloquently preached by Buddhism.

We cannot deny, therefore, that there are great souls who lead lives of purity, love, and spirituality and show the world the way to God. Some of them, like the avatars, seem to be, by their very nature, perfect, but they appear to undergo all the trials and tribulations of human life in order to show humanity

the way to God. As Sri Ramakrishna says, 'The avatar or saviour is the messenger of God. He is like the viceroy of a mighty monarch. As when there is some disturbance in a far-off province the king sends the viceroy to quell it; so whenever there is any waning of religion in any part of the world, God sends His avatar there.' Again in another of his sayings Sri Ramakrishna makes clear the nature of the avatar thus :

There are two sorts of men. The guru said to one of his disciples, 'what I impart to thee, my dear, is invaluable; keep it to thyself', and the disciple kept it all to himself. But when the guru imparted that knowledge to another of his disciples, the latter, knowing its inestimable worth, and not liking to enjoy it all alone, stood upon a high place and began to declare the good tidings to all the people. The avatars are of the latter class.

Some impatient reader may here ask us, 'Why, then, all this wickedness and misery in the world in spite of your God and all His incarnations? We do not see they are ultimately any good.'

This is a question that crops up in our minds, off and on; and the answer is not easy. It is not easy because of our inability to grasp the full nature of the world or God. We should not imagine that we have posited the existence of this apparently imperfect world, because there is a perfect God. No, it is the other way about. The existence of this finite, imperfect world, with all its handicaps, has made it a logical, psychological, and spiritual necessity for us to think of something perfect, something in which there is no limitation of any kind to curb our spirits. The existence of this imperfect world cannot be denied, as it is a fact of our common everyday experience. It is equally true that for our spiritual satisfaction this world is not enough; we require another, commensurate with the innate vastness of our spirit; and that we call God, the Infinite, by reaching whom alone can the spiritual hunger of the individual man be finally satisfied. That there is such a world we can well believe on the testimony of many souls whom humanity has acclaimed as great in spirituality. The testimony of such souls to an inner and all-satisfying reality cannot be dismissed

easily. It stands on a level with the truth of the experiments performed by modern scientists. How glibly do we swallow the findings of modern science even though the number of scientists who have convinced themselves of the accuracy of the experiments are but a handful? It is said of Einstein's theory that very few scientists have understood it fully in all its ramifications and implications. The vast majority of men have no other go except to take many things on trust, depending upon the honesty and veracity of scientists. It is beyond the capacity of all but the most gifted to understand the scientific experiments that have led to the theory of the electrical nature of the universe. Similar is the case in the field of religion. There have been men in previous ages, and there are men in present times who have felt and understood the existence of God, the underlying reality of all things that we see, and have proclaimed their conviction in no uncertain terms, nor without exercising a deep, and wide-spread influence on many human lives. They have explained the methods by which they have reached their goal, and have left footprints on the sands of time to guide others on the path. As the *Katha Upanishad* says, 'Having received this knowledge taught by Yama and the whole rule of Yoga, Nachiketas became free from sin and death, and obtained Brahman. Thus it will be with another also who knows thus what relates to the Self.' (II. vi. 18.)

#### IV

The most important requisite, therefore, for an aspirant is *sraddha*, faith, the belief that God-realization is possible. A man becomes as great as his faith. Faith is a childlike and unsuspecting trust in the truth of the advice tendered by the guru or taught by the scriptures. This is the first step in the ladder of spiritual discipline. 'He who has faith has all. He who lacks faith lacks all', said Sri Ramakrishna.

Now many will raise this objection. There are gurus and gurus; there is not a sage or

a saint but his opinion differs from that of others. Moreover we find different religious scriptures teaching apparently conflicting things. How are we to have faith in the words of these scriptures, or in the words of gurus who swear respectively by the scriptures of their own religion?

This argument is the prolific mother of all doubts, vacillation, and indifference to spiritual progress. It is the common argument we hear nowadays from the educated classes of almost all countries. On the face of it the argument seems to have much force. But if we look closely into the matter we shall find that it obscures the real issue by emphasizing the points of disagreement in each religion. It neglects the fundamental unity underlying all religions in that they are all attempts by the human soul in different times and in different climes to reach God, the infinite source of all bliss, as the Vedas declare Him to be. All religions are but roads chosen by particular individuals or groups to suit the peculiar circumstances of time, clime, and race. The methods vary in their externals; and the intellectual theories spun about God may vary; but the goal is God. People in various countries take different kinds of food cooked in a hundred different ways, but the aim of all is physical sustenance. Similarly, God is worshipped in a thousand ways and in a thousand forms, but the aim of all worshippers is spiritual sustenance. Sri Ramakrishna said, out of the depths of his experience of the practice of various types of religion, 'As many religions, so many paths'. In this connexion

he emphasized that even if we happened to choose a wrong path, it would not matter if only we were sincere, and prayed for light and correct guidance. In that case all our difficulties are bound to be smoothed.

About the apparent differences of opinion in religious matters, his parable of the chameleon is very illuminating :

Two persons were hotly disputing as to the colour of a chameleon. One said, 'The chameleon on that palm tree is of a beautiful red colour'. The other, contradicting him, said, 'You are mistaken, the chameleon is not red but blue'. Not being able to settle the matter by arguments, both went to the person who always lived under that tree and had watched the chameleon in all its phases of colour. One of them said, 'Sir, is not the chameleon on that tree of a red colour?' 'Yes, sir.' The other disputant said, 'What do you say? How is it? It is not red, it is blue'. The person again humbly replied, 'Yes, sir'. The person said that the chameleon is an animal that constantly changes its colour; thus it was that he said 'yes' to both these conflicting statements. The Sat-chid-ananda likewise has various forms. The devotee who has seen God in one aspect only knows Him in that aspect alone. But he who has seen Him in His manifold aspects is alone in a position to say, 'All these forms are of one God, for God is multiform'. He has forms and has no forms, and many are His forms which no one knows.

The first step, therefore, is the cultivation and strengthening of the belief that God-realization is possible and attainable. One has to be a 'believer', but not in the narrow sense in which it is used by Christians and Mohammedans. As the *Katha Upanishad* puts it :

He (the Self) cannot be reached by speech, by mind, or by the eye. How can He be apprehended except by him who says 'He is'?

By the words 'He is' is He to be apprehended, and by admitting the reality of both the invisible Brahman and the visible world, as coming from Brahman. When He has been apprehended by the words 'He is' then His reality reveals itself.

It is only by means of one's best exertions and the fixing of his mind to one object, as also by the subjection of his desires, that the ultimate state (of bliss) can be arrived at. So it is by means of discrimination, reasoning and ultimate ascertainment of truth, that a man may avoid the snares of misery, and attain his best state.

# A BACKWARD GLANCE AT PRABUDDHA BHARATA'S FIFTY VOLUMES

BY ST. NIHAL SINGH

(Continued)

## 5. Tuning in the Generator

In the conduct of the *Prabuddha Bharata* from now on (August 1898), any careful observer can easily—quickly—detect an impulse—strong and continuous. This impulse found expression on pages 1 and 2 of the revivified magazine. They bore an inspiring message from Swami Vivekananda. I reproduce it here in full :

TO THE AWAKENED INDIA

Once more awake!

For sleep it was, not death, to bring thee life  
Anew, and rest to lotus-eyes, for visions  
Daring yet. The world in need awaits, O Truth!  
No death for thee!

Resume thy march,

With gentle feet that would not break the  
Peaceful rest, even of the road-side dust  
That lies so low. Yet strong and steady,  
Blissful, bold and free. Awakener, ever  
Forward! Speak thy stirring words.

Thy home is gone,

Where loving hearts had brought thee up, and  
Watched with joy thy growth. But Fate is strong—  
This is the law,—all things come back to the source  
They sprung, their strength to renew.

Then start afresh

From the land of thy birth, where vast cloud-belted  
Snows do bless and put their strength in thee,  
For working wonders new. The heavenly  
River tune thy voice to her own immortal song;  
Deodar shades give thee eternal peace.

And all above,

Himala's daughter Uma, gentle, pure,  
The Mother that resides in all as Power  
And Life, who works all works, and  
Makes of One the world, whose mercy  
Opens the gate to Truth, and shows  
The One in All, give thee untiring  
Strength, which is Infinite Love.

They bless thee all,

The seers great, whom age nor clime  
Can claim their own, the fathers of the  
Race, who felt the heart of Truth the same,  
And bravely taught to man ill-voiced or  
Well. Their servant, thou hast got  
The secret,—'tis but One.

Then speak, O Love!—

Before thy gentle voice serene, behold how  
Visions melt, and fold on fold of dreams  
Departs to void, till Truth and Truth alone,  
In all its glory shines.—

And tell the world—

Awake, arise, and dream no more!  
This is the land of dreams, where Karma  
Weaves unthreaded garlands with our thoughts,  
Of flowers sweet or noxious,—and none  
Has root or stem, being born in naught, which  
The softest breath of Truth drives back to  
Primal nothingness. Be bold, and face  
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease,  
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,  
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

\* \* \*

Vivekananda's capacity for attending to detail—for taking pains—was almost infinite. He felt that the *shloka* from the Sanskrit, as translated for the early volumes, did not express, with exactitude, the purposes he had in view. The altered motto, taken from one of his lectures, read, 'Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached'.<sup>1</sup>

The change went far beyond this. The editorial face was turned fully towards the rising sun. Rajam Iyer had been, I need to recall here, greatly impressed with Schopenhauer's dictum.

That philosopher had written,

The white man and his fair lady, ... stray into the  
Indian woods and there come across the Hindu sage

<sup>1</sup> *Katha Upanishad*, I. iii. 14.

under the banyan tree. The hoary tree, the cool shade, the refreshing stream, and, above all, the hoarser, cooler, and more refreshing philosophy that falls from his lips enchant them. The discovery is published; pilgrims multiply. A Sanyasin from our midst carries the altar-fire across the seas. The Spirit of the *Upanishads* makes a progress in distant lands. The procession develops into a festival. The noise reaches (the) Indian shores, and behold! our Mother-land is awaking!\*

So struck had Rajam been with these prophetic words that he had them pictured. The cover-design, as I wrote, caught my boyish fancy. I then was too young to see, however, that even at that date the sketch did not visualize a prophecy, but represented an ideal long since realized. This was not perceived even by Rajam, my senior by several years.

#### Truly speaking, it

...would be an anachronism to continue to paint Western men and women straying today into Indian woods and alighting, as if by the merest chance, upon a Hindu sage, and standing there, shy and uncertain, at a safe distance, ready to fly at a moment's notice, when, as a matter of fact, the Sanyasin's banner has been carried by the rising sun of the *Prabuddha Bharata* itself to the very heart of the West, and that Noble Truth—the one thing that is the inheritance of India alone amongst the nations—the Truth that behind this manifold curtain of existence there is Unity, is winning its way daily and hourly deeper into the hearts of men and women in the West, illuminating their science and philosophy, and giving a colour all its own, to their profoundest utterances.\*

These words were penned by Swarupananda, whom I mentioned in the preceding section. To him was entrusted not only the editing of the magazine, but also the development of the Ashrama. No fitter person, within or without the brotherhood established by Vivekananda for the service of the motherland, could, in my view, have been chosen.

It was easy to discard the out-of-date cover-design: but not so easy to replace it with one that would attractively express the ideal. For a time, therefore, the *Prabuddha Bharata* appeared, from Almora, with a plain, unembellished cover.

\* *Prabuddha Bharata*, August 1898, Vol. III, p. 14.  
• *ibid.*

Vivekananda devised, in time, a 'symbol' that represented the quintessence of the Ramakrishna philosophy. As it is plain from the illustration:

The sun is just mounting above the far face of a lake. Wind, also rising, disturbs its waters. A swan serenely floats amidst the eddies, his neck gracefully arched. Just below his pure white body a lotus is in full bloom. The white petals shine against the jade leaves. They have parted to display this marvel of nature. A hooded cobra, with tongue stretched out to sting, is twined round its own tail, forming a frame for the device. Against the snake-skin and below the lotus are lettered the ages-old *mantra*—तत्त्वे हस्तः प्रचारयात्—'May the swan (i.e. the ever-free Brahman) illumine our hearts'.

This device symbolized man's struggle against the passions that assail him—his eventual freedom. The swan represents the soul (*jiva*); the lake the mind; and the waves the changing moods (*vrittis*).

The rising sun symbolizes the power of knowledge—*Jnana* *Yoga*; the swimming of the *jiva* is indicative of labour without craving for reward—*Karma* *Yoga*; the lotus stands for devotion to God—*Bhakti* *Yoga*; and the serpent forming a circle (*Kundalini*) is emblematic of immortality emanating from *Raja* *Yoga*. All four forms of *yoga* are mobilized by the invocation 'May the self inspire us—guide us'. In this age, Vivekananda held, all four *yogas* must be practised, none of them being, by itself, adequate to our twentieth century complex minds.

Having produced a rough sketch of the device, the Master insisted upon an artist presenting him with a finished drawing. All those submitted to him struck him as singularly unattractive. Where, he asked, had gone the genius that had given the motherland its rock-cut temples—its *Taj Mahal*—its *Raja* *Man Singh's* palace? When driven to the verge of despair a sketch was produced that finally was adopted as the *advaita*

symbol and embellished the *Prabuddha Bharata* cover.

When the Master was nigh, work for Swarupananda and his assistants was not only easy, but also was joyful. The giants of the forest, its birds, beasts, and human bipeds, called to the Master. He liked to watch them frisking about, chirruping, mate calling to mate, the female of this species or that feeding with bill or from the breast the young it had been the means of bringing into existence—existence that was but a breath in eternity's never-ending cycle. He never tired of looking at the strong, sturdy, wooden (were they only wooden?) frames glorying in their naked majesty. His eye fondly lingered over the vine, fragile-looking but often, in reality, stronger than the fabricated rope, flaunting its starlets of many hues against the ashen, or may be the brown or sere form that it hugged. Rapture came to his soul when his uplifted vision fell upon the multitudinous peaks, with their sharp-pointed diamonds shining against the azure, or copperish, or rose, or salmon-coloured, or dove's or mackerel, or sheep's wool-flecked heavens.

These sights and sounds set some spring within his heart to flowing. He would talk of things of this world, all the worlds, and no world—of beings who had been shot out of eternity and were shot back into eternity—of their miseries, or may be their vanities, or their childish babblings and brawlings down below in the laps of velvety valleys or on the steaming, broad bosom of the plains. All the while he would be devising ways and means to help them and their brothers and sisters across the waste of waters—each to help himself or herself to a sure, secure anchorage in never-ending bliss.

Even in these communings, Vivekananda was never selfish. He would have with him one or another of the brethren or his spiritual children. Towards him, or her, or them, as the case may be, the outpourings from his mind, heart, and soul would flow, now in a

gentle, meandering stream, again with the rush and roar of a mountain torrent.

Out of these contacts, intimate and yet strangely impersonal, emerged matter in plenitude for the *Prabuddha Bharata*. It was cast into many forms—notes, articles, critiques, and interviews.

As, through the courtesy of the custodians of the old, precious volumes, I turn the leaves, ever so gently, reminiscences are awakened in me. These whirl me back to my own early essays in writing—essays made in hours stolen from school and college studies.

One of the earliest numbers sent out from the Himalyan culture power-house contained the Swami's concepts concerning 'aggression in a religious sense'.<sup>4</sup> Therein he told the *Prabuddha Bharata* representative—Swarupananda, to be sure—that since Buddha's time we (the Hindus) had lay prone—any outsider with any 'ism' could walk all over our prostrate bodies without a murmur from us; and even capture our bodies without remonstrance, much less resistance, from us. The movement he had inaugurated was, however, meant 'to awaken the national consciousness'<sup>5</sup> in us and this, as I interpreted it, by finding the common bases of Hinduism.<sup>6</sup>

\* \* \*

One evening the Master sat on the roof of a double-decker boat gliding over the bosom of *Ganga Mai*. The sun had sunk some time earlier. The afterglow was gone. The mind effortlessly turned, in consequence, from the outward to the inward thoughts.

A disciple attached to the *Prabuddha Bharata* asked, 'What of the Hindus who are lost to us for one reason or another? Should they be welcomed back to our fold, or disdainfully repulsed?'

'When the Mohammedans first came' to India, he replied, there were '600,000,000 Hindus'. So, he believed, Ferishta, the

<sup>4</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata*, September 1898, Vol. III. No. 2, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

historian, had stated. In 1899 'we are (only) about 200,000,000'.<sup>7</sup>

With the quiet manner that distinguished him on such occasions, he added :

'Not a few of the Hindus were forced out of the fold. Why should the descendants of these be victimized? Why should they not be received back into Hinduism?'

In centuries gone by, crowds of 'born aliens' were Hinduized. The process was still going on.

He was no stickler for 'ceremonies of expiation'. He would not impose them upon those 'who were only alienated by conquest -- as in Kashmir and Nepal--or on strangers wishing to join us'.<sup>8</sup>

In regard to the caste into which the

<sup>7</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata*, April 1899, Vol. IV, No. 4, p. 49.  
<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

Hinduized persons were to be received, he reminded the interviewer, 'Converts from different castes and aliens were all able to combine under' the flag of Vaishnavism. They were able to 'form a caste by themselves—and a very respectable one, too'.<sup>9</sup>

There also was a piece elaborating one aspect of this theme. It was 'Mohammedananda'.<sup>10</sup> Inspired by Vivekananda, the writer sought to show that the religion brought from Arabia was, in its essential spirit, in harmony with the faith of our fathers. He was of the opinion that 'the only hope' for 'our own motherland' lay in the 'junction of the two great systems—Hinduism and Islam'. Vedanta, he conceived to be the 'brain and Islam (the) body'.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *vide The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. II, p. 680.

(To be continued)

## THE VEDANTIC CONCEPTION OF EDUCATION

BY PANDIT JAIWANT RAM, B.A., B.T.

The Vedantic conception of education is unique in many respects : it is very wide in scope, embracing the whole ambit of life ; it steers clear of the pitfalls which confront most of the educational theories, pitfalls which consist in their concentrating attention on one phase of life to the total or partial exclusion of others, in no way less important ; it is as full and comprehensive as life itself. It is on this account not without profit to make a careful and deep study of the conception of education that Vedanta philosophy puts forward. According to Vedanta the life of man is permeated by ignorance and forgetfulness, and education consists in awaking the man from these. This implies both the necessity of education and the educator. That man is a highly educable being follows as a corollary from this conception. In the *Chhandogya Upanishad* this has been exemplified by an analogy. There the man

without light and learning has been compared to a man who has been blindfolded, bound hand and foot, and thrown into a thick impenetrable forest, unable to move and ignorant of the direction in which he should move. Anon comes a teacher who removes the bandage from his eyes and unshackles him, and, giving him directions, enlightens him as to the path he should pursue in order to reach his destination.

The view that a man is steeped in forgetfulness is from the standpoint of psychology clearly confirmed by the well-known fact that all progress is a progress in self-consciousness. This awakening, though stated in the scriptures as one final event as far as the final spiritual awakening is concerned, comprises, in fact, so far as the whole gamut of life goes, a series of awakenings, the one leading to the next higher stage till the sleep of ignorance has altogether been shaken off for good. . .

There have been recognized marked stages of psycho-physical nature, climaxes which when properly harnessed for educational ends accelerate the process of education and awaken the soul to further possibilities: thus is the task of education carried on, not in opposition to but in alliance with Nature.

As the educational process involves a graduated series of awakening it is the awakening not of a part or a fragment of man, not of the physical at the expense of the mental, nor of the mental and moral at the expense of the physical or spiritual, not merely of the spiritual, as ordinarily understood, at the expense of the intellectual, not of the other world at the expense of this world, not of this world at the expense of the next, but of the whole, integral man.

And to the Hindus this is not merely a theoretical doctrine not reducible to practice but one affording sound practical guidance in the everyday educational process which is moulded in conformity therewith. What methods does the Vedanta advocate and employ to bring about this awakening? As the Vedic conception of education is unique, so are its methods. The Hindus set great store by *samskara* without which the educational process, however effectively carried on otherwise, becomes divested of much essential value. The attempt to firmly grasp the fundamentals of the Vedic system of education desiderates a full comprehension of the doctrine of *samskara*. Education without the requisite preliminary *samskara* (here education is being used in its broadest sense) is like trying to place a tool in the hands of a man who has neither the desire to use it nor the requisite knowledge as to the scope of the method of its use. *Samskara* is the foundation on which the edifice of education is reared. Now what is *samskara*? *Samskara* literally means impression. The term includes within its scope the stamping of the proper impression at the proper time and all the means adopted to accomplish this end. Allusion has already been made to particular periods in the growth of the human organism when certain mental tendencies make their

first appearance and begin to unfold. Vedic psychology maintains that while proper bent given during these impressionable periods will, like the seed sown in the soil at the proper season, bring about wished-for results with comparatively less toil, the evil done by imparting a wrong bent at these critical junctures will not be completely undone by a bundleful of devices adopted later on. The main agent in the creating or unfolding of *samskara* is what in modern psychology we call suggestion. It has been proved to the hilt that a suggestion given under proper conditions produces wonderful results whose scope extends from the eradication of a specific mental or moral defect of a minor nature to the wholesale cure of chronic diseases and vital modification in character. The efficacy of suggestion has been fully acknowledged by modern psychology but its services have not been utilized to the full extent in the cause of education and therapeutics. By penetrating to the sub-conscious mind which carries out commands like a scrupulously faithful servant, suggestion, when earnestly imparted accomplishes comparatively effectively and quickly, especially at certain stages of life, what other methods cannot accomplish even with double the labour and treble the time. No creed or philosophy, ancient or modern, has recommended the employment of suggestion so comprehensively, so forcefully, so boldly and scientifically as Vedanta in its practical aspect.

From the strictly materialistic point of view, periods of life after youth called declining years, are comparatively barren being unproductive and characterized by steadily diminishing interest in the various things of this world; but according to the Vedantic point of view, each later stage should be marked by a higher sort of awakening and the lack of interest in things mundane is not a sign of decay but an urge for something higher, an urge which is woefully neglected in the present-day scientific civilization, but one fully recognized and utilized by Vedanta for the development of a higher spiritual

nature for which proper *samskaras* are also prescribed. This is decidedly a much higher conception and invests the whole of life with meaning. . .

All this however implies a higher aim which, according to the Vedanta, is nothing short of the complete awakening of the spirit resulting in the establishment of complete *Swarajya*, the dominion of the effulgent glory of the Self over things both mundane and extra mundane. But this is the final aim and in order to reach it the souls must pass through certain stages with distinct aim each as important in its period as the final aim. These are the *dharma* (duty), *artha* (possession), *kama* (accomplishment of higher ambitions), and lastly *moksha* (perfect freedom). During the later periods too much premature stress was laid on the last which brought in its wake not only weakening of secular interests of life and the health of the body politic but sometimes hindered the full consummation of the fourth which requires as a condition of its consummation the maturation of the first three. This four-fold aim of education leaves no faculty with which a human being is endowed, unexercised, and keeps one on the *qui vive* against that great thief of human progress—indolence and indifference. Eternity of soul does no longer remain here a mere philosophical dogma but a practical precept shaping the whole course of education and exalting one to spiritual heights transcending the narrow limits of this world as well as the next.

With this exalted aim serving as a beacon light to guide them and with this conception of life let us see what educational method was adopted by the Hindus to achieve that end.

According to Vedanta, that surely is not knowledge which consists in the mere accumulation of information, mere reading of books; these have a place in education but only a secondary place. That again is not education which appears as a kind of extraneous possession but does not become part and parcel of life and modifies its tenor. Education is an awakening from ignorance—

ignorance of the outer world, ignorance of the inner world. For a comprehension of the educational methods pursued by Vedanta which are uninfluenced by any ulterior motive, by any foreign influence, a study of the *upanishads* is indispensable.

It may be stated here at the outset that we shall confine our attention to the method only irrespective of the subject matter for which those methods have been employed. The *upanishads* contain a mine of information to which it is impossible to do full justice within the limited compass of a short article. Only a broad outline can be given. The first important principle on which a very serious stress is laid and which is recognized as the very core of educational doctrine and the foundation on which the edifice of educational method can be raised is the presence in the pupil of an ardent desire or, what is to say the same thing, a very strong interest which, as has already been stated, at a certain stage in the growth of a man would spontaneously come into being. If it is altogether non-existent nothing whatsoever can be done. If it is weak it should be strengthened, if dormant it should be roused and if it is shallow or superficial it should be rendered serious by means of appropriate tests. Indra approaches Brahma in order to acquire *Brahma Vidya* but is asked to stay for thirty-two years giving a practical proof as to the earnestness of his desire before the knowledge in question can be imparted to him. To test whether the desire is genuine or not the boy Nachiketas is effectively dissuaded from the pursuit of *Brahma Vidya* by the grant of boons which might have tempted even the ascetics. Arouse the interest is the slogan of the present-day psychologist. 'Aye' says the *upanishadic* seer, 'but see that it is genuine and sharpen it; for rousing interest is half the education'.

The heuristic method, the Socratic method, the Project method—the employment of all these methods is to be discovered in the *upanishads*, the one consistent aim all along being to lead the pupil to discover things for himself. These methods and others of

the type do not, however, by any means exhaust all the various methods employed in the *upanishads*, for pupils of different types and at different stages of life. Much is nowadays being said and written under the influence of the modern educational psychology on the utter desirability of the teacher playing the role of a guide while all the work is being done by the pupils under his control. But a practical illustration on and demonstration of this sound educational precept is seldom to be met with in the educational literature ancient or modern in the illuminating form in which it is found in that chapter of the *Taittiriya Upanishad* which deals with the instruction in *Brahma Vidya* of Bhrigu at the hands of his father Varuna. Although the whole of it cannot be reproduced here yet it deserves being described at some length, as it will afford an insight into the nature of teaching methods adopted in the *upanishads*. Young Bhrigu alive with the desire to know Brahman approaches his revered father with the request that he may be initiated into the mysterious lore. The father does not forthwith begin to expound the secret doctrine with all its philosophic implication, engendering confusion and propagating in its wake repulsion in the place of interest ; but he pithily places before him the essential attributes of Brahman and leaves it to the boy to investigate, in the light of this guidance, what Brahman is by means of meditation and concentration. In the course of his ardent search the son passes through a series of conclusions each marking an important philosophical stage but the father does not contradict or criticise him but simply repeats his original direction implying that the true goal has not been arrived at and ceases repeating it when the true goal has been reached. This is a method of making the pupil rigorously exercise his mental faculties and discover the truth by unaided efforts. This however implies in a pupil a very superior endowment by nature.

But for pupils who were not so extraordinarily gifted the method adopted was one which though possessing all the virtues

of the previous method did not entail the severe burden of original thinking. This was the method which, while others were during the succeeding periods relegated to the limbo of oblivion, has been retained intact up to the present day ; though outside the narrow circle of Vedanta it is not widely employed in the sphere of general education. It was the well-known method of *shravana*, *manana*, *nididhyasana*, and *sakshatkara*—mental processes which converted the newly acquired knowledge from the status of a loose mental content into an integral part of life by organizing it into the texture of the very being of the pupil.

*Shravana* means learning from the teacher ; *manana* is the process of assimilating it by resolving doubts ; *nididhyasana* consists in meditating on the assimilated knowledge ; and *sakshatkara* is illumination. This I consider to be one of the greatest discoveries of the Hindus in the sphere of education without which all knowledge is of uncertain nature, and whose value to life is questionable. Only recently have occidental thinkers in the department of education propounded a view of higher education similar to this. Even at the risk of its appearing as a digression it brooks being quoted :

But if we have taken stock of the new investigations of the psychology of insight, and if we have noted how often we ourselves slove problems—though not without the use of former experience to be sure—there seems to be room for a recent contribution of Fletcher who sets up a companion type of thinking, the creative type. Taking a cue from Helmholtz and Wallace he suggests three stages of such thinking :

1. The stage of preparation, i.e. of study, absorption, and investigation, (2) the stage of incubation or assimilation, and (3) the stage of illumination, i.e. of insight or creation.

The steps are analogous if not identical.

Not only for obtaining spiritual knowledge or rather knowledge of the Eternal but also for getting a true insight into the fundamentals of educational methods which brook being employed in other than spiritual spheres the contribution of Vedanta is not only unique but deserves (especially the method side) being further explored.

# THE CULTURE AND RELIGION OF THE YORUBAS OF WEST AFRICA

BY SUNITI KUMAR CHATTERJI, M.A., D.LIT. (LOND.), F.R.A.S.B.

It was in 1919, in the month of September, that I arrived in London for my two years' stay and study there. As soon as I had settled down in my student lodgings, I went to see the various collections in that wonderful treasure-house of objects of antiquarian, historical, anthropological and artistic interest—the British Museum of London. In this all-embracing institution, housing specimens of the handiwork of man in all ages and all climes, I was enabled to form an acquaintance, quite unexpectedly, with a collection of objects about which I had previously not the slightest idea—viz., objects illustrating the art of the Negro peoples of West Africa. As a student of language, however, I had only some general notion of the linguistic classification of the African peoples, like the Hamites, the True Negroes, the Bantu Negroes, and the Bushmen and Hottentots. But like most people in India and elsewhere, I used to think that the Negroes of Africa were a savage and barbarous people, and they had nothing of civilization and art, of thought and religion of any high order, comparable with what we find among civilized peoples. But after I had seen a series of artefacts produced by Negroes of the city state of Benin in South Nigeria in West Africa—bronze heads, images, and groups of figures in bronze, bronze plaques with reliefs of human figures and animals and birds, figures and plaquettes in ivory, caskets and other ivory objects—my eyes were opened up to a new and a strange world of beauty, the strangeness and the unexpectedness of the type of artistic expression lending it an extra charm which was not merely the charm of novelty. My curiosity in Africa, and particularly in West Africa, was awakened; and whatever was easily available, in the library of the British Museum and elsewhere, I began to read with avidity, to form some idea of the cultural milieu in which this remarkable art of Benin was born. I was in this way enabled to learn something about the various peoples of Africa, and their religion, culture, and art, and to visualize them in their proper atmosphere. I noted with pleasure that the successful achievement and the abiding beauty of the attempts at self-expression in the field of plastic art which the primitive African peoples had made were already discovered by the artists and art critics of Europe who had an eye for the truly artistic. I gradually realized that the peculiar and noteworthy expression of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful, which has taken place through the religion, culture, and art which evolved in the life of the various primitive peoples of Africa, was quite acceptable to sympathetic and appreciative spirits among humanity at large.

What the primitive peoples of Africa had built up, working under various and peculiarly adverse circumstances, could show, as among all other peoples, much that was good and beautiful and worthy of the sincere appreciation of man, side by side with certain things which were cruel and ugly, foolish and shameful. What should be a matter for general congratulation is that the peoples of Africa, so long remaining such a long way behind the civilized races, are now slowly coming to realize that they too have contributed something which is worth preserving; and they are feeling that they should not always consider themselves as eternally backward and helpless, and condemned for ever to drag on an ignominious existence on scraps from Europe's feast of culture. It must be admitted that the eye of the intelligent African is at last opening up, and a true spiritual awakening is taking place for him through the influence of the cultured mind of Europe—the mind of Europe which understands, and seeks for the truth, and is liberal and human in its outlook. The Africans, as a result of this, will be able to free themselves of a sense of inferiority which is now sitting on them as an incubus; they will learn to judge their own culture with proper sympathy and understanding, freeing themselves from the excessive awe with which they were accustomed to look upon the Christian organization and culture brought to them by the missionary, and upon the overwhelming might of the machine-made civilization of Europe. They will not then feel so very humiliated at the poverty of their primitive life, when they understand it in its proper context. This growing change of mental outlook is certainly a bit of good news, not only for the black man of Africa alone, but for the whole of humanity.

I came to form some idea of African art and culture during my two years' stay in England (1919-1921); and then subsequently, in 1935 and 1938, I was enabled to visit some well-known centres of African art in the museums of the Continent. During my stay in London as a student, I formed the acquaintance of some African (Negro) gentlemen who were also sojourning there, and through their contact it was possible for me to know a little more intimately some aspects of African life and ways, ideas and ideals; and this knowledge helped to create in my mind a great sense of respect for the African and his native culture.

In the whole of Africa, peoples belonging to no less

than seven distinct types of speech and culture form the native inhabitants. These are (1) the Semitic, (2) the Hamitic, (3) the Bushmen, (4) the Hottentot, (5) the Bantu Negroes, (6) the Sudanian or Pure Negroes and (7) the Pygmy Negroes or Negritos. Of these seven groups, the Semitic and the Hamitic are closely related to each other—in language if not in race: the Semitic and the Hamitic languages are believed to belong to a common Semitic-Hamitic family, from which these two branches separated in prehistoric times. The Hamites appear to have been living in the whole of Northern (Mediterranean) Africa since time immemorial; the people of Egypt who built up her ancient civilization were Hamites. The Berber tribes of Algiers, Tunis, and Morocco, like the Kabyles, for instance, the Tuaregs of the Sahara, and the Somalis and Gallas of Eastern Africa—these are also Hamites, and are kinsmen of the ancient Egyptians. The Hamites belong to the white race. The Semites originally did not belong to Africa. Their homelands were Syria and Arabia, and they had quite early settled in Assyria and Babylonia. From South Arabia, Semitic colonists came and settled in Ethiopia or Abyssinia where they brought their language; and groups of Semites from Syria and Palestine also made settlements in Egypt in very ancient times. They were able to modify the life and culture of their linguistic kinsmen, the Hamites of North Africa, most profoundly; particularly in post-Islamic times, the Arabs, in the course of last thousand years, established their Moslem religion and their Arabic language all over North and Central Africa; from the Red Sea to the Atlantic they have created a new Arab world where the language and the culture of Arabia reign supreme, even if the local languages in North-West Africa and the Sahara still persist. The Semitic and Hamitic peoples who both belong to the white race have no genetic relationship with black Africa—the two groups originally are distinct. In considering African Africa, or Negro Africa, the Semitic-Hamitic peoples have no place, except as a strong solvent force from the outside. In South Sahara and West Sudan—along the upper course of the Niger river particularly,—there has been a great intermixture of the Hamites from the Sahara and the north with the local True Negroes, and this has led to some new mixed tribes or peoples, like the Hausa of Northern Nigeria and the Fulani, Fulbe, or Peul (Pol) of French West Africa, who form very well organized and advanced African tribes; and similarly in East Africa, among the Swahili and other Bantu-speaking Negroes, there has been a certain amount of Arab influence. Peoples of mixed origin like the Fulani and the Hausa, and the Swahili, are true Africans nevertheless, although they lack the interest that is attached to the True Negroes and the pure Bantu tribes: and as these have accepted Islam some centuries ago, they have, in matters purely cultural, passed out of the circle of true Africa. The Bushmen and Hottentot peoples are also related to

each other, linguistically and racially, very much like the Semites and the Hamites. These live in South Africa: they belong to a race quite distinct from the Negro race which is found in its two main branches. Bushmen and Hottentot culture has always been at a very low level, although the ancestors of these peoples showed some artistic powers in ancient times in their cave paintings; but they are not considered in discussing purely Negro culture. The Pygmies are a kind of very short-statured Negroes who have no real culture of their own—they are in the lowest scale of civilization. These Pygmies are found in the dense forest regions of Congo State, and they have been influenced even in language by their neighbours, the Bantu peoples. Their cultural milieu is also quite distinct from that of the Negroes proper.

The Negroes of Africa, forming the distinctive people of the 'Black Continent', fall into two broad groups, not considering some important local variations in the heart of Africa, in East Sudan—(a) the Bantu of Central and Southern Africa, and (b) the Sudanic Negroes or True Negroes of Western and North-Central Africa. There are certain fundamental agreements between these two groups in physical appearance, in character and temperament, and in general cultural milieu, including social organization; but nevertheless, these two groups show a great contrast in certain other matters—e.g., in language, in religious notions, and in social life and customs.

The Sudanic or True Negroes of West Africa are in a way the best representatives of the black peoples of Africa. These Sudanic Negroes, considering their languages and their past history (Sudanic Negro languages bear a general family likeness among themselves), are conveniently divided into a number of tribes. Of these tribes, the following are the most important, in West Africa: the Nupes, the Ibos, and the Yorubas of Southern Nigeria; the great group of Chi or Twi tribes in British Gold Coast colony—the Ashanti or Fanti, and the Ewhe being two of the most important of them; the Gan of Dahomey; and the Baule, the Mandingo, the Mossi, the Bambara, the Songhoi, the Senufo, the Wolof, and other tribes of French West Africa. The Yorubas people of Nigeria (closely related to whom is the Bini tribe of the city of Benin in South Nigeria, who were one of the most artistic peoples of Africa, famous for their bronze statuary and plaques, their ivories and their wood-carving), and the Ashantis of Gold Coast are two of the most intelligent and most advanced peoples of West Africa, being quite noteworthy in physical appearance, in cleverness, and in enterprise; these, and the Baganda people of Uganda in East Africa, who are a Bantu people, represent the highest level of modern African Africa, and in intelligence and adaptability to modern culture, as well as in their stable social organization, they have shown themselves to be quite capable of holding their own before Europeans even.

The African gentlemen whose acquaintance and friendship I made in London during my student days in 1919-22 were all Yorubas, and one of them was an Ashanti. A little point in nomenclature may be mentioned here as something quite à propos. Educated Negroes of Africa are never ashamed to refer to themselves as 'black men'; but they do not like to use the term 'Negro' for themselves, because of the English corruption of the word, 'nigger', being used in abuse only—although the source-form of both 'Negro' and 'nigger', *viz.*, the Latin word *niger*, just meant 'black'. They prefer the word 'African', and Europeans and others who are sympathetic and who do not want to give offence also use the term 'African'. In the same way, the Malay peoples of Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) now take pride in designating themselves as 'Indonesians', and not by their tribal or local names. The names 'Africa' and 'African' have become, so to say, symbols of a newly awakened Negro or Black African consciousness. From these Yoruba friends of mine I came to know that the Yorubas formed quite a nation—they numbered three millions, of whom a third were Christians, another third Moslems, and the remaining third were followers of their old African 'pagan' religion. The people are singularly free from religious quarrels, and conversion either to Islam or to Christianity is purely voluntary; but there is a certain amount of resistance offered by the old religion, the traditions of which are still quite strong, to the new faiths. The Gods of the old religion of the Yorubas still receive worship from the people in what may be described as public shrines or temples, (in certain places these are considered specially sacred), and in the family shrines of householders. The Yorubas live mainly by agriculture, and they raise cereals like rice and maize, and the yam which is their staff of life, palm-oil and peanuts for home consumption, and cocox and cotton as well as mahogany wood for export. They are now fairly prosperous; and the Yoruba country is densely populated. The landholders and farmers appear to be quite well off. There are some fairly biggish towns in Yorubaland—*e.g.*, Lagos, the sea-port town and capital of Nigeria (with more than 150,000 inhabitants), Ibadan (about 250,000 people), Ogbemoshé (90,000), Ilorin (85,000), Abeokuta, and Iwo (each 55,000); and in addition to these, there are several other towns with populations ranging from thirty to fifty thousand. In these towns, they have their old chiefs, some Christian or Moslem, others following the national religion; and they carry on the affairs of these considerable settlements in their old way, and are eager to adopt whatever in the European system would appear to be helpful or better for them. The city of Ife is the centre of their religious life. To the west of Yorubaland are the countries of Dahomey (inhabited by the Gan people), and Togo, and further to the west is the colony of Gold Coast, the home of the Ashantis. The economic

condition of the people of these parts is quite satisfactory, like that of the Yorubas.

In 1920, while at London, I came to know a Yoruba student from Lagos named Nathaniel Akinremi Fadipe (or Fadikpe). Eighteen years later I was enabled to see him again in London in 1938. When I met him first, I asked him the meaning of his name, or surname. He said that the word 'Fadipe' was composed of three elements—'Ifa-di-kpe', which meant 'the Gift of the God Ifa'. I asked him about the old African religion from which evidently he had got his family name. Fadikpe was himself a Christian, but I was pleased to find that he had no contempt for the old religion of his people. He told me about the God Ifa that this particular divinity was associated with prophecy and foretelling, and the centre of his worship was the city of Ife, where his priests used to tell the future with the help of sixteen palm-nuts from a special kind of palm-tree—the priests throw the nuts on a round or oblong tray of wood carved with figures, and they calculate how many nuts fall on the tray or remain in hand by drawing lines sixteen times on the tray, and in this way seek to interpret the mind of the God regarding the matter in hand. I had an impression from Fadikpe's talk that he had a sort of faith in the efficacy and truth of this kind of prophecy, but he explained to me that he was born in a Christian family and so he did not know much about the old religion, which was still a living faith with about a million of his people.

Later on I met a Moslem Yoruba prince or chief, Chief Oluwa, who was one of the twelve 'white cap' chiefs of Southern Yorubaland. This chief had come to London in connexion with a law suit with the English Government in Nigeria about certain landed properties near Lagos which the Government had taken over from him without paying anything and over which the chief claimed he had rights (I was glad to find that finally the chief won his case). The chief was a dignified old man in his loose black and white robes of an Arab style. His son accompanied him, and he was a handsome young man, looking splendid (when I had occasion to see him in his residence) in a blue cloak, stamped with many-coloured designs, worn toga-fashion exposing his right shoulder and forearm with the biceps of an athlete, and with leather sandals on his feet—quite the figure of an ebony statue in the classical style. Another person who came with the chief was a Yoruba compatriot of his, a gentleman of the name of Herbert Macaulay, who acted as the chief's secretary and was the manager in his case. The name was British, but Mr. Macaulay was a true African patriot, in spite of his British name and his immaculate English suit. He was a man of education and culture, and had taken his degree in engineering in a British university, and he was a well-known citizen of Lagos and a leader of his people. Mr. Macaulay's maternal grandfather was Bishop Crowther, the first full-blooded African to be consecrated

a bishop of the Anglican Church. When a small boy, Bishop Crowther was rescued by the British navy from the slavers in West Africa, and taken to England to be educated, and then he was consecrated priest and sent out as a missionary among his own people. I could learn a good deal from Mr. Macaulay about Yoruba society and ways of life. A Yoruba clergyman had written a book, originally in the Yoruba language (the Yoruba speech had no writing, and the Roman script was adapted for it by the Christian missionaries), on Yoruba heathenism, and this book was translated into English; and Mr. Macaulay had brought a copy, and he lent it to me. I was very pleased with the book, as the author was trying to make his countrymen take a sympathetic interest in the pre-Christian religion of the Yorubas. This Yoruba-speaking *padre* compared Yoruba 'heathenism' with Greek or Roman 'heathenism', and he made it clear to his people that their ancestors were heathen or pagan in the same way that those of the present-day Christian English were heathen or pagan.

There are a good many educated chiefs, and other cultured men among the Yorubas, some of them were with European education. But they were not a bit ashamed because of their old religion, and some of them were quite anxious to preserve it. This sense of pride in their religion as a basis of their culture, and this conservatism certainly formed a refreshing expression of the robust mentality of this section of the people of Africa.

This sense of pride and intelligent appreciation of their own religion and culture appears to be manifesting itself among the Yorubas and their neighbours and kinsmen—particularly among the Twi or Chi tribes, like the Ashantis. The towns of Kumasi and Accra are the political and cultural centres of the Ashantis. Among the Yorubas, Moslems, and pagans as well as some Christians and Europeanized people, do not wear the tight-fitting clothes of the Europeans; rather they affect the loose drawers and long shirt with a loose sheet as a toga, which is a dress quite suitable for the hot climate of the country. The Ashantis have still kept up their very beautiful native African dress, from the chiefs downwards; they still wrap the beautiful looking cloak round their bodies (the cloak is made up of a piece of stamped and dyed cloth with peculiar native African patterns in colour), and wear their sandals of a classical shape: and gold rings and chains of native Ashanti workmanship offer a beautiful harmony of colour against the smooth black skins of the wearers.

Some years ago, a Congress of Religions was held in some town in America—probably it was in Chicago. It was not on such grand scale as the historic Congress of Religions which was held there in 1893, when the announcement, by Swami Vivekananda (of illustrious memory), of the ideals of Hinduism before a concourse of nations was the most

important event. In this more recent Congress, as usual, representatives of different religions and peoples came and spoke. From a list of the names of people who were to come and speak for the different religion, at this Conference (I regret I did not take down the necessary reference), I found that there was the name of an Ashanti gentleman—he was to be present in America all the way from Kumasi in Gold Coast in West Africa, and to take his place in the gathering among speakers on behalf of the better known or international religions, and proclaim the ideals of his own African religion, his African 'paganism' as it had developed among the Ashantis, as something which could be placed before civilized humanity and which in his opinion was entitled to its sympathetic and respectful consideration, and possibly, acceptance.

All lovers of Man, with a fellow-feeling for the backward and exploited peoples, will realize the significance of this little event, which symbolized the resurgence of the national self-respect of an unknown and unrenowned African people who had been denied, by force of circumstance, to rise to the full height of their being and to make their proper contribution to the corporate culture of man. We do not know anything about the religion of the Ashantis—what are its philosophical bases, and its spiritual realization. It has been always blazoned forth before the world that the Africans following this and similar 'pagan' religions were in the habit of offering human sacrifice, and in their mental and spiritual life they were quite a depraved lot, who required an aggressive and a drastic form of Christianity and Europeanization to bring them up to something like a civilized level. The fact of human sacrifice in certain forms of African Negro religion has not been denied, and cannot be denied; but it can be said as a general statement that there has been a good deal of propaganda, conscious or unconscious, against the moral and spiritual life of these peoples and their mental capacities, patent and latent,—a propaganda which is very largely the result of an intolerance due to an incapacity to understand primitive peoples whose life did not conform to British and other European Christian standards, and was also based on a desire to exploit a helpless people.

I shall say something about the moral life of the Yorubas (these conditions also hold good in the case of other African tribes or nations similarly situated) which will show how unjust and false conceptions are spread about backward peoples who have no means of asserting themselves. The Yoruba gentleman mentioned above, Mr. Herbert Macaulay, once told me, in course of conversation: 'See, Mr. Chatterji, the peoples of Europe have nothing but contempt for us as we are black men, uncivilized dwellers in forests, and rude barbarians in front of the cultured white peoples of Europe. They send missionaries to us to "civilize" us and to "improve" our morality and our life. But the

truth is, they destroy the bases of our old morality and old culture when they seek to destroy ruthlessly all our old ways. The life that old-fashioned Africans followed in the olden days, the life traditionally received from their fathers and grandfathers, was certainly not a life of advanced civilization, but there was no place in it, generally, for thieves and liars and for those who were enemies of public well-being.<sup>9</sup> Even to-day the people of our villages have not wholly given up this old-fashioned adherence to truth. In our country the village or the country-side is known in English as the "bush". We have a number of main roads going through the "bush" i.e., through villages, fields, and wooded tracts. There is generally scarcity of water—we do not have many wells, and "water holes" or ponds and tanks are also few. Neither is there any proper system of inns or lodging-houses, or shops and resting-places. Early in the morning, a woman from a village would come to the main road, a few miles awry, with a bunch of coco-nuts and another bunch of plantains, as well as an earthen jar of water. There she would put down in the shade of some big tree by the way-side, and in the coco-nut-shell cup covering the water-jar she would put three little stones; near the bunch of plantains two stones, and similarly near the bunch of coco-nuts, five or seven stones. Arranging everything in this way she would go back home to her village. The idea is that wayfarers along the high road would sit down in the shade of the tree to rest, and if they wanted they could buy a drink of water in the coco-nut-shell cup from the water-jar for three cowries only—in our country cowrie-shells are still in use as small currency—and could have a plantain from the bunch for two cowries, and a coco-nut for five or seven cowries. In the evening the owner of the water and fruits would come from the village, and she would find so many cowries for so much water taken by her unseen customers, and for so many plantains and coco-nuts, and would find her accounts squared up, and go back home perfectly content with her takings and her water-jar and the remaining fruits if any. There is no non-payment and no thieving of the unguarded fruits and water and the cowries in this kind of buying and selling without the seller being present. On the whole, the old honesty largely persists. But the contagion of "civilization" has already started its evil work in some parts of the country.<sup>10</sup> Mr. Mcnulay further said: "You see, we had all along in our society certain strict rules of life and discipline and there was the tremendous force of public opinion. People could not do whatever they liked in matters affecting the community as a whole. Now they can do it, for, under the law of the white men, no one can prevent them. But we had formerly a good many "good forms", and that was on the whole beneficial to our society. Take, for example, marriage. A young man is a marriageable girl in some festival, or in the weekly

or daily market, and wishes to marry her. He talks to his friends, and one of them informs the young man's grandfather or grandmother or some similar relation. Then, if the family of the girl is respectable, the parents of the young man would send a proposal for the marriage by means of a professional go-between or match-maker. After that there would be a secret enquiry from either side—whether any ancestor of the boy or the girl ever had one of these three dreaded diseases—syphilis, leprosy, or lunacy. When both families passed this enquiry, marriages in respectable African families could only then take place.<sup>11</sup> It must be admitted that a people whose personal and social morality and organization had developed in this way were certainly in possession of a high culture, although they had not been able to create a great architecture or art, or to make contributions to science and thought, or even to produce any noteworthy literature.

The religion and thought which take shape among a particular people depends upon the following things—its basic nature or character, its material environment, its economic life and means of livelihood, and the time it can devote to serious and to beautiful things after meeting the elemental demands of hunger and safety; and it depends also on contact with other races with a distinct and a superior culture. The Africans of West Africa along the coast of the Gulf of Guinea do not appear to have had much to do with a cultured foreign people before they came in touch with the Portuguese some 450 years ago, when the Portuguese first came there for trade and for finding a new sea-route to India. Before that, some influences from the Mediterranean area—from Greco-Roman and later Islamic-Arab cultures—may have trickled down to these peoples along two routes, from the north along the Sahara caravan tracks, and from the east, from Egypt, through Central Africa. A good deal of Portuguese influence is seen in the art of West Africa—unless it was really Egyptian and not Portuguese; but Portuguese influences on West African religion do not seem to have been effective at all. Definite Moslem influences came there, long after the European domination of the coast lands, through Arab and Islamized upper Nigerian traders like the Hausas. But long before that, the West Africans had built up their special religious world, with its bases of speculation and ritual, its mythology and cults, its priesthood and its festivals—as we can judge from ancient cult-objects and from ancient traditions about religion, some of these cult-objects having been discovered but in recent years. Consequently we are entitled to look upon the religion of the West African Yorubas and allied tribes as an independent creation of the mature African mind and African society in a specific African milieu. The religious notions and ritualistic practices which we see among the West African tribes that are still heathen, like the Nupe, the Ibo, the Yoruba, the Gan, the Ewhe,

the Ashanti, the Baule, and others, and in the remnants of pre-Moslem religion which still survive among the superficially Islamized tribes like the Mandingo and the Songhoi, present certain family likenesses, in spite of a number of inevitable tribal, local, and linguistic divergences, as these had evolved within an identical geographical, economic, and cultural atmosphere. Not having the competence for it, I shall not try to give a comparative study and estimate of the heathen world of West Africa, but I shall try to present the main points in the religion and mythology of one prominent West African people only—the Yorubas.

It seems more has been written on Yoruba religion and culture in English and other European languages, than on those of any other West African people; and the Yorubas themselves have contributed to this. The Yoruba religion may be taken as typical of that of West Africa as a whole. My facts I have obtained mostly from the books by Colonel A. B. Ellis, R. E. Dennett, Leo Frobenius, and Stephen S. Farrow, and some sidelights have been found from books on African art.

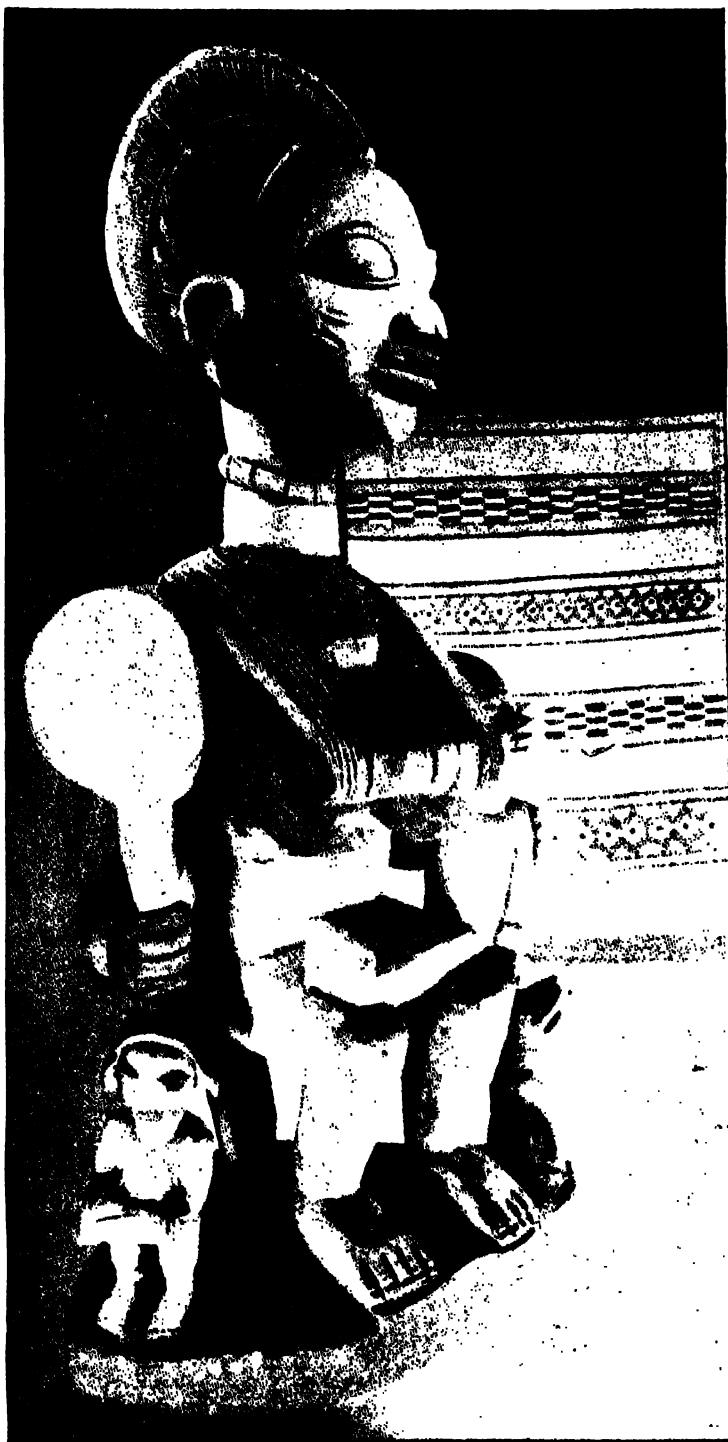
An elaborate series of cults of different Gods, and an extensive Mythology—these are two of the most important expressions of a religion; and Yoruba religion shows quite a high development in these lines. A religion cannot spread among the masses or be acceptable to them if it does not feed their imagination by beautiful or passable legends and stories. But all peoples do not evince the high type of imagination or poetic faculty required in producing beautiful myths and legends, and many peoples are absolutely lacking in the proper aesthetic faculty. The pre-eminence of ancient Egyptians and Mesopotamians, of the Greeks and Indians, and of the Celts and Germans in the myth-making faculty is not very common elsewhere. Throughout the whole of Africa, after the Hamitic-speaking Egyptians of ancient times, the people of the Yoruba speech have shown the greatest achievement in evolving a finished system of mythology. We have a number of Gods and Goddesses of personality and character in Yoruba religion, and some noteworthy myths; and the Yoruba Gods are entitled to a distinctive place in the pantheon of all religions, because of their special character.

A very special type of art has grown up around these myths and legends, among the Yorubas proper and their allied tribes. This art has expressed itself in images and bas-reliefs, and in sculpture and modelling, in metal, ivory, wood, and terracotta, as well as in pottery and wooden vessels. The wood-carvings of the Yorubas of the present day, and bronzes of ancient Yorubaland and of the city of Benin, as well as the ivories, are specially to be mentioned. The place of this art is the highest in African Africa; and in its pure beauty and truth as a cultural expression this West African art can be said to be a *ktiwa et aei*, 'a possession for ever' for the whole of humanity.

A section of mankind which follows Judaism and the

religions which are its offshoots, namely, Christianity and Islam, uses certain words of contempt for their fellow-beings who belong to religions other than these three, words which imply that God's truth is confined only to one or the other of these three religions, and none outside these knows or can even aspire to know this truth. A European word expressing this mentality, as it developed within Christianity, is *pagan* (and *paganism*) those who do not accept the authority of the Bible (or the Quran among the Moslems) are pagans. The word means 'belonging to the village or country-side, rustic', and then it came to imply the backwardness which is associated with rustic life. Explaining the word differently, we may say that a religion which is not founded on the teachings or sayings of a single historic teacher who is regarded as inspired and infallible, and which has been since time immemorial naturally evolving as the expression of the mind, the heart and the actions of people living in a particular geographic, economic, and cultural milieu, is a natural religion—is a form of paganism; and taking the word *pagan* in this sense, we cannot object to its use. This pagan religion, in order to be raised to something acceptable for mankind in higher stages of evolution, must have a system (or systems) of thought linking it up with the Unseen Reality. This is what we see in all ancient natural or pagan religions as among the civilized peoples of antiquity like the Greeks, the Chin and the Hindus. Some time ago, Mrs. Savitri Mukherji, a highly cultured Greek lady, who has accepted the naturally evolved religion of India, Hinduism—our Indian Paganism—has written a very fine and thought-provoking book on Hindu culture and its preservation, *A Warning to the Hindus*, and in this work she has in all seriousness and with fullest justification made a defence of Paganism (in the above sense) as the natural and proper religion of man. The Yoruba religion is a paganism of this type, bearing a family resemblance to ancient Greek or Chinese religion, and to Hinduism in its popular form.

Being unable to grasp the character or implications of the natural religion in its various forms as current among the peoples of Africa, and giving undue emphasis to one of its outward expressions, European writers at first gave it a name which is still commonly applied to it 'Fetishism'. Fetishism means faith in the magical powers of some object (*a fetish*), natural or man-made, and holding such an object as sacred as the mystic repository of some supernatural power, and sometimes wearing it as a charm or amulet. Among many African peoples we see the custom of showing divine honour to a piece of stone, or seeds of fruit, or a piece of cloth, or a figure of metal or wood, or a piece of bone, or a bunch of feathers, or to any other object, thinking it either naturally or through some ritual to be the abode of some special power. These fetishes are kept in temples (fetish-houses), and some are worn by priests in



ODUGUA, THE MOTHER GODDESS  
(Yoruba wood sculpture)

religious men or by ordinary lay people. But such a belief and practice is not confined to the rude and uncivilized people of Africa alone: the belief in charms, amulets, talismans, and masons, which are either kept in the home or are worn on the person, is quite an extensive thing in civilized Europe; and certain things in official Christianity also belong to the same category, and are but forms of fetishism, although many people would not like to be told that. Consequently it will not be proper to describe the natural religion of Africa merely as 'Fetishism'. Similarly, it cannot be described as 'Animism', or faith in natural objects possessing a spirit (or a manifestation of the Supreme Spirit) in them.

There is no quarrel among the various kinds of natural or pagan religion as they have evolved in different ages and among different peoples—they all have a mutual respect, and hold themselves to be fellows in the same quest. Owing to a number of historical reasons, the tendency to regard itself as the only true religion, and consequently to have nothing but contempt for other religions as idolatry, showed itself in Judaism; and this attitude was inherited by Christianity and Islam—in some of their aspects at least. This attitude is responsible for what may be called religious imperialism or religious totalitarianism, which seeks to destroy all other forms of religion or religious experience and to set up itself or its own in their place. The natural or pagan religions are free from this vice. Such an attitude, claiming all truth to itself, and looking upon it as being exclusively linked up with God, can only be looked upon as a form of blasphemy. There is another matter to consider. In spite of a great many differences in their externals, a study of the various natural religions makes it clear that, notwithstanding their different formative milieu, mankind has, in the various climes and times, arrived independently at some general realizations of a fundamental character: e.g., the immanence of God in everything, and a realization of the spirit that is behind all existence; the realization that there is an Ultimate Truth that is beyond all perception, an Absolute Truth not capable of description and limitation by ascribing to it qualities; that Gods and goddesses are manifestations of this Ultimate Reality, manifestations conceived by imagination or faith; and that it is possible for the spirit to be incarnated in the mundane world, on more than one occasion.

Many of the ideas in natural religions all over the world show agreement with some of the basic things of the natural religion of India as summarized by her philosophy. But it would be only a kind of chauvinism or jingoism if we were to show our anxiety to trace Indian influences in such cases. 'My people is the greatest people of the world, and God has vouchsafed a special grace to my people, by making it the supreme leader or the supreme teacher of nations'—such an attitude is also a kind of blasphemy. Thus, in the conception of the *Tao* in China we should not try to

trace it to the Indian conception of the *Brahman* or the Supreme Spirit in its *nirguna* or attributeless and *saguna* or attributed aspects, or to the idea of *Rita* or the Eternal Law as something which directs the universe, considering that there is no evidence of Indian and Chinese culture-contacts prior to the fourth century B.C. This conception had dawned in the mind of the Chinese *rishi* Lao-tsze independently in the 7th-6th century B.C.; and when we look at the thing in this light, we realize the natural universality of a great spiritual idea. Similarly, certain great ideas of Sufism may have evolved independently among the Arabs and Persians, without any Indian or Greek influence.

The Yorubas believe in a divine power, something like our *nirguna* Brahman—the Absolute without attributes. This Absolute Divinity they call *Olorun*. Most of the tribes of West Africa (as well as of Bantu Africa) have a similar belief, only they have different words in their several languages for the same attributeless or remote spiritual Being, the ultimate Source and Repository of everything. The Ashantis call this spirit *Nana-Nyankupon* or *Nyankupon*, 'Lord of the Sky'; the Gans call it *Nyonmo*, and the Ewes, *Maru*. The name Olorun means 'Lord of the Sky'. The Christians regard Olorun as the equivalent of Yahweh or Jehovah, and the Moslems as the same as their Allah. Yoruba Christians speak of the supreme Christian God as Olorun. Other names of Olorun express his greatness—e.g., *Elela* (Creator), *Alaye* (Lord of Life), *Olohumare* (Almighty), *Olohumaye* (Self-created), *Elami* (Supreme Spirit), *Oga-Oga* (Very Great), and *Oluwa* (Master, Lord). Of course, the Yorubas have not arrived at a truly philosophic conception comparable to the Vedanta philosophy of India. But in Olorun, they have formulated the idea of a unique Divinity without a second, who is equally just and judge of good and evil.

But this Supreme Spirit has always remained a little remote—at least in present-day Yorubaland: Olorun is never worshipped with offerings as are the lower or lesser Gods. The Yorubas conceive of these lesser Gods in the name of *Orishas*, and it is these Orishas who direct the affairs of men, their life with its joys and sorrows, and they also are working through the forces of nature. The word *Orisha* is differently explained—as 'the highest one selected' (*ori*—summit, top, and *sha*—to choose or select), or as 'one who sees the cult' (*ri*—'to see', and *isha*—'selection, choice'). The neighbouring Ashantis and other peoples have a similar conception of lower gods, or gods with forms and functions, the Ashantis calling them *bohsun*, the Gans *wong*, and the Ewes *vondu* (this last is the possible source of the West Indies Negro word *voudou* or *voodoo*). The Orishas number, according to various authorities among Yoruba priests, 201, 401, or 600. Many Yorubas have an Euhemeristic idea of their Orishas—that these were men and women at first, and then they were translated into the domain of Gods. But Yoruba myth and legend about the origin

and history of the Orishas is just like the divine myths and legends of other peoples. Olorun created a God to rule this earth in his place—this God was Obatala ('the White God' or 'the Lord of Light'), and Obatala's wife was Odudua, which may mean 'the Black One'. Odudua was not created by Olorun: she is Nature as distinct from the Godhead, and she has been in possession of a separate and independent existence from eternity (this

Earth, who was depicted in the usual way, as in other lands—as a woman as mother holding a baby. Obatala and Odudua had a son Aganju, and a daughter Yemaja. These two married, and had two offspring, Obalofun or 'Lord of Speech', and Iye or 'Mother'. Aya Obafun and Iya were the progenitors of mankind. Another son of Aganju and Yemaja was Orungan, and this last violated his mother, who, for this, courted death. After her



(b)

(c)

## FIGURES OF YORUBA DEITIES

(a) Shango, the God of Thunder

(b) (c) Oya, Goddess of the Niger River, Shango's Wife

supports another explanation of her name as 'the Self-existent Personage', or 'the Chief who created existence'). Obatala-Odudua as twin faces of existence, as light and darkness—of good and evil, of life and death, so to say—recall distantly the Indian conception of *Puusha* and *Prakriti*, of *Shiva* and *Shakti*: only the *Prakriti* or *Shakti* here is of evil character. The Yorubas worship Obatala as the God of Purity and Beneficence, and he is the soul of good, the creator and saviour of men; but Odudua's character has been very adversely conceived, as something evil and vicious. Obatala is the Sky-Father, and Odudua the Earth-Mother; the lower sinful aspect of the Earth as opposed to Heaven, has been ascribed to Odudua. It is said that Odudua left her husband Obatala for a passion she conceived for another God who was fond of hunting. Yet Odudua remained the Great Mother Goddess of the Yorubas, the Almighty Mother

death, her body swelled, and from her flesh, blood, and fat the Fifteen Chief Gods of the Yorubas had their birth. These are the great Orishas who receive the worship of the Yorubas still faithful to the old religion. Similar deities are found among the related tribes of West Africa—only their genesis is different.

Among the various Orishas the following are the most important:

(1) Shango is the God of Thunder, and he receives a very great deal of veneration and worship from the Yorubas—with Ifa he is the most popular God. He is said to live in state, in a brass palace, in the clouds of heaven, surrounded by his followers, and he is the master of a large number of horses. Shango is frequently figured in metal and wooden images—as a bearded man, riding a horse. Shango has three wives—Oya, Oshun, and Oba; all the

three of them were created from the body of Yemaja, like Shango himself; and all of them are river-goddesses, the chief of these three being Oya who is the goddess presiding over the great Niger river in its course through Nigeria. Shango sends punishment to men for their misdeeds. Among Shango's attendants are the god Oshumare or 'the Rainbow', whose function it is to draw water from the earth into the brass house of Shango, and Oru, the thunder-clap, who is his messenger. Shango's special symbol is the double-axe. The following chant or hymn to Shango is very popular :

O Shango, thou art the master !  
 Thou takest in thy hand the fiery stones,  
 To punish the guilty !  
 To satisfy thy anger !  
 Everything they strike is destroyed,  
 The fire cuts up the forest,  
 The trees are broken down,  
 And all things living are slain.

Shango's stones are thunder-bolts, and sometimes these are described as the red-hot chains of iron which he hurls on those who offend him, chains made for him by his brother Ogun, the God of Iron and War.

(2) Ogun presides over iron, war, and hunting. He is said to exist in any piece of iron. Blacksmiths, soldiers, and hunters specially worship him.

(3) Ifa is perhaps the most popular of the Orishas, and he is frequently looked upon as the supreme God. He is the God of Oracles, and pious Yorubas must refer everything to the oracle of Ifa. The priests of Ifa are known as Babalawos (from *Baba-li-awa*, 'the father who has the secret'), and these priests are powerful and respected. They shave their heads and pluck off all hair, and wear white robes (light blue in the great shrine of Ifa), and they are believed to know the mind of Ifa by divining by means of palm-nuts cast on a tray. It is said of Ifa :

Ifa always speaks in parables,  
 It is the wise man who understands—  
 If we should say we understand—  
 The wise man will understand—  
 When we do not understand,  
 We say, It is of no account ! (or, It is not fulfilled !)

These priests are initiated into the order or priesthood at great expense, after they have gone through the training from three to seven years. The profession is quite lucrative, and full of honour.

Apart from oracles, Ifa is a God of Fecundity also, and barren women pray to him for children. He is also a God of Salvation, and in that aspect he is known as Orumilla, meaning 'heaven knows salvation', or Elu, which is a contraction of Orumilla. In songs and proverbs he is frequently invoked as the Saviour :

O thou Elu ! Son of the Ruler,  
 I humble myself before thee !  
 O Elu ! I praise the sacrifice of acceptance,—

O Elu ! I praise the life-giving sacrifice,—

O Elu ! I praise the sacrifice of labour.

(4) Orishako, Orisha Oka, of Oko, the God of Agriculture. As women mostly did agricultural labour (working with the hoe), Oko has mainly women among his worshippers and priests. Oko represents the fertility of the earth. An iron rod is his emblem, and honey-bees are his messengers.

(5) Shopono (pronounced *shaw-paw-naw*) is the God of the Small-pox. He is depicted as an old man, sick and lame, moving in pain with the aid of a stick. As the other gods derided him, he tried to infect them with the small-pox, but he was, for this, outcasted from the society of the gods. His temples are consequently away from the homes and haunts of men, in the 'bush'.

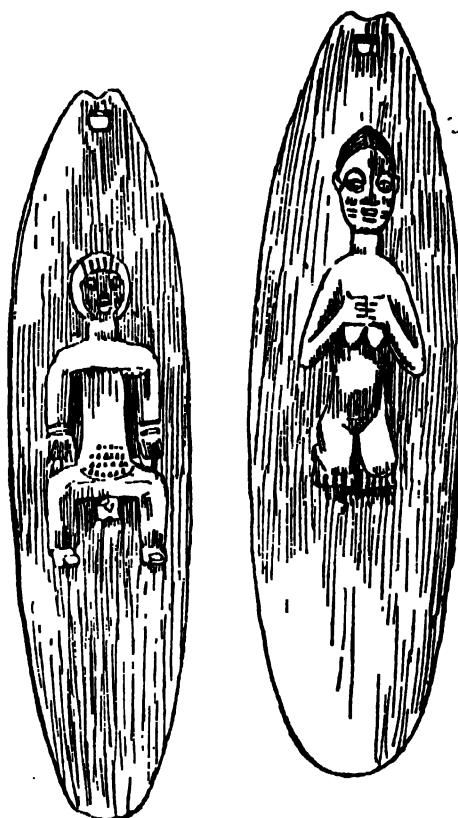
(6) Olokun is the God of the Sea, worshipped by sailors and fishermen specially. He is supposed to be of a human form, black in colour, and with long flowing hair. He once tried to punish men by overflowing the land, but Obatala restrained him and sent him back to his palace under the sea, binding him in seven iron chains. Among his wives is Elusu or Olokun-su, who is depicted as being white in colour, with her body covered with fish-scales.

(7) Aroni is a wood spirit, whose dominion is the forest. He seizes and devours all whom he catches in the forest, but he loves courageous persons who face him boldly, and rewards their courage by keeping them with him for months and teaching them the secrets of plants, so that they come out as doctors. The murmur of the wind through the trees and the flying of dead leaves show his presence.

There are other Orishas, and the Yoruba pantheon is quite extensive. After the Orishas, the spirits of the dead, particularly of the ancestors, find worship. The Yorubas have divided the ghost world into various kinds of spirits, and there are different kinds of priesthood and societies connected with the worship of the spirits. A class of people or priests (called *Oros*) act as spirits of the dead returned to earth, and they perform certain rituals, and receive fees. The *Oros* come out at night, completely covered in robes of rushes, and make weird calls all through the night, and at the same time make noises with what are known as 'bull-roarers'—these are oval and flat bits of wood attached to a string, and when these are swung round with the string they make a buzzing noise, the depth and carrying power of the noise depending upon the size of the bull-roarer which is from 6 inches to 2½ feet long. (Ritual with the bull-roarer is known to the aborigines of Australia; and in the state of Tripura in Bengal we have an annual worship of Durga or the mother Goddess by the Tipra people, in which bull-roarers, locally known in Bengali as *bhomra* or *bhemra*, play a part.) In their ritual of worship there are certain things—offerings and ceremonies—which are the result of their local natural conditions and their culture.

In addition to the gods and spirits, the Yorubas worship also a god or spirit of Evil—a sort of Satan—whom they call *Eshu*.

The Babalawos or priests of *Ifa*, by their divination, decide for a Yoruba child what particular *Orisha* he is to adopt as his special protector (as *Ishta Devata*,



Two "Bull-roarers",  
with Bas-reliefs of Yoruba Deities

as we say in India); and they worship regularly and with special ritual these tutelary deities. Religiously minded Yorubas, who are the bulk of the Yoruba people, salute their special gods the first thing in the morning after rising from bed. When getting down into a river or tank to take a bath, they frequently chant prayers to the Gods—prayers in the Yoruba language. Their temples have nothing special about them—they are just the thatched huts like those in which they themselves live. Different temples or structures in honour of the different gods are built for the public, and rich or middle class people also have a sort of a family chapel at

home or in the courtyard with images of the gods. Sometimes sacred groves of trees serve as temples; and a big tree is frequently enough looked upon as an abode of the gods. Ordinarily cooked food, fruits, etc. are offered; alcoholic drinks are poured, eggs are broken, and birds and beasts of various kinds are slaughtered by way of worship. Flowers are not offered, but bells or clappers are used. Different classes of priests have different forms of dress; thus the priests of *Obatala* always wear white, and have necklaces of white beads. They salute by touching the earth with the forehead. A sacrificed animal is either burnt before the image, or its blood is smeared at the threshold of the sanctum. The food and meat as well as wine offered to the Gods are partaken of, like consecrated food, by the worshippers. Over and above ordinary ritualistic worship, personal approach to the deity and worship by prayer is also known—according to their needs, people commonly pray and try to commune by means of prayer with *Olorun*, *Obatala*, *Shango*, *Ifa*, and the rest.

The Yorubas have a full sense of the immortality of the soul. Man, they believe, obtains reward or punishment for his deeds. There is also a belief in transmigration. But their ideas and speculations about the hereafter are not deep or definite or philosophical. The final resting-place of the soul of man is *Olorun* or the Supreme Spirit.

We can see that in far away West Africa the so-called wild or savage black man is actuated by the same ideas and feelings, the same hopes and fears, likings and dislikings like ourselves; and the natural religion which they built up has many a point of agreement with our Indian religion—in fact, with all religions. It is difficult to speculate what line their religious life and culture would have taken if they had come in touch with the mind of Hindu India, with its civilized and cultured outlook and its great spirit of understanding and sympathy, fellow-feeling and tolerance. But I venture to think this much, that the tolerance and respect for other peoples' ideas and beliefs, which is so deeply imbedded down to the marrow of Hindu religious life, the tolerance and respect which found a new expression in the great saying of Sri Ramakrishna Deva, viz., 'as many opinions, so many ways' (*jato mat, tato path*), would have strengthened the Yorubas and other similar backward peoples of Africa and elsewhere to hold fast to the abiding things of their own culture; would have helped them to find the highest good, their spiritual salvation, in their own way; and would have spared them a good deal of the humiliation which is the result of an intolerant creed and a strange one being thrust upon them.



## FROM THE HIMALAYAS TO CAPE COMORIN

By A WANDERER

(Continued)

From Mysore I went, for a day, to Coorg, that little tiny spot on the map of India but having a separate form of administration. Formerly it was a 'Protected State', but Lord Bentinck annexed it to British India in 1834. Coorg is a bit isolated as there is no direct railway communication. Its exports and imports are controlled. In war times this was a distinct advantage. For in Coorg there was no scarcity of food. People also seemed to be fairly prosperous. One has to go to Coorg from Mysore by motor bus, covering a distance of about sixty miles. The drive was very pleasant. The road was also nice, covered on both sides by deep jungles, and at places by coffee, orange, or cinnamon plantations. Coorg also has got a beautiful natural scenery—there being a combination of hills, plains, and forests. The sight enchanted me. But even the beauties of external nature have got their limitations. After some time they wear off, when you become too familiar with them. You cannot derive any permanent joy from them. The *upanishad* truly said that the lesser minds seek joy in the external world, but those who are wiser find eternal bliss deep down within themselves. For peace and happiness, so long as you depend on anything outside of yourself, you suffer. When you have found peace within yourself, you are at rest. Nothing can disturb you.

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I had heard so much about Ootacamund, that 'Queen of Hills', that I was eagerly waiting for the day when I would be able to visit it. From Mysore to Ooty—about fifty-five miles—is four hours' journey by a motor bus. Nowadays it is irksome to travel by bus. But the Victory Bus Service plying between Mysore and Ooty keeps down the

traffic, by charging a bit higher. Travelling by that Service is quite pleasant. As we approached Ooty, that high hill, with an altitude of 8,000 ft., looked as if rising suddenly from the plain land. But, as usual, the motor took a spiral way, and going round and round the hill it climbed to the top. With its tall eucalyptus trees, green vegetation, and here and there thick forests, Ooty looks really charming. I could imagine why Ooty is so much adored by the hill-goers. But to me suddenly came the thought of comparison : Which is better—the Himalayas or the Nilgiri ? In the Nilgiri greatly do I miss the stately deodars, which are abundant in the Himalayas. So also do I vainly look for pine trees. And that long range of eternal snow, where could you find its parallel in the whole world ? Ooty is beautiful—very beautiful indeed. But it cannot radiate the sublime influence of the Himalayas. In the Himalayan region you at once feel an uplifting effect, you feel as if you belonged to a higher plane of existence, leaving the world with its maddling crowd below—far, far below. Your thoughts become lofty, your vision becomes high, your outlook broadens, and you aspire after something magnificent though you may not be definitely knowing what that is. At Ooty you feel you are in a beautiful surrounding, but living in an ordinary human plane of existence. As these thoughts passed through my mind I myself became suspicious of them. Why did Ooty fall below the Himalayan abode in my estimation ? Was it my local patriotism ? For reasons I searched within myself as well as outside. Ooty is a hill-station where all go for pleasure, comfort, and enjoyment. The Himalaya is a vast region where the hill-stations are absorbed within its bosom and which is still associated

with the spiritual aspirations of India. 'Are there temples in Ooty'?—I asked. Hardly any, I was told. Has the Nilgiri built up a tradition that people, when tired of humdrum routine life of the world, resort to it to compose their thoughts and soothe their lacerated hearts?—No. Then the reason was obvious why the Nilgiri appealed to the senses, and the Himalaya to the soul. Afterwards I learnt that that had been the experience of some other persons who had been both to the Himalayas and the 'Blue Mountain'. Then I found relief at the thought that my judgement was not vitiated by partiality.

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From Ootacamund I went to Malabar. I had heard so much about the orthodox Numbudri brahmins of Malabar, that I was seized with a longing to see them, to know them, to learn how they lived and what was their outlook on life. I heard that even now there were some orthodox brahmins who would not drink a drop of water without having finished their worship which lasted from morning till about two in the afternoon. I was conducted to a typical orthodox brahmin home. The house was spotlessly clean with flower gardens in front. The family was not very rich, not poor either. I was introduced to the head of the family—an old man. I talked with him through the help of an interpreter. I understood he was also very austere in his habits—even in his old age. I liked the man and his benign smile. I felt as if the five thousand years of India's past were peeping through his eyes at me. Too much criticism has been heaped upon the poor heads of these orthodox people. But could it be denied that they have preserved the culture of Hinduism? In their house can be witnessed even now some of the ancient Vedic rites. And how much love do they bear for the old customs and traditions! Compare their life with that of some of our countrymen who culturally belong neither to India nor to the West—who are a queer amalgam, a hybrid product. Orthodoxy is a wall which gives you protection,

and which has got a great preservative value. Of course, if you are long within a wall, your life becomes isolated, it becomes a stagnant pool—sometimes giving out a stinking smell. That is what I felt when I visited the Harijan quarters. Even after so much agitation, the Harijans are not allowed to drink of the well or bathe in the same pond which is used by the brahmins. When I heard of this, I felt exasperated. My love and admiration for orthodoxy dried up. But there came a ray of hope. In the very village where I stopped there was a school where all classes of boys—from the orthodox brahmins to the pariahs—sat together and read together. And even in the hostels, boys and girls belonging to the highest and lowest classes stayed and dined together. I heard that some orthodox families sent their boys and girls to this institution with deliberate intention, so that they might grow up with wider sympathy and a broader outlook.

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As I started for Kaladi very early in the morning by a motor bus, I met large numbers of little boys and girls on the way, each with a small tiffin carrier in hand. I thought they were going to some school, and inwardly felt happy at the thought that though poor their parents were interested in their education. But in the course of conversation, with a fellow passenger I learnt that they were labourers in some factory, and as they would have to remain long hours there, they were carrying their noon-meals. I was horror-struck at the news. In such an early age when they should be sent to schools and live in mirth and joy, they were sent to grind their life in some soulless factory! How unfortunate they must be! Their parents do not know what harm they are doing them for the sake of a small pittance. Because of poverty, if these boys and girls were to do some agricultural works, their life would not have become so much blasted. They would have, then, lived in open air, amidst nature, and that would have a salubrious effect on their body and mind—though they might be working very very hard. They might be

singing like a lark, or running like a deer, and now ?—they will be cooped up in a stuffy hall, doing the dry, dreary, monotonous works till their own life will be as soulless as the machine at which they will be working. Yes, that has been the curse of industrial civilization, and more unfortunate thing is that with all criticism against it, it has come to stay.

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Kaladi is the birth-place of great Shankaracharya, who lived in the eighth century and, even in those days of difficult communication, travelled from the extreme north to the farthest south of India, preaching and revivifying the decadent Hinduism. His intellect is the despair of modern scholars, and even now it becomes difficult to refute the arguments he put forward in favour of the Advaita philosophy. Kaladi is a place of pilgrimage for persons interested in Hindu philosophy. It is a village on the bank of the river Alwaye, bearing the memory of association with that great teacher. People point to the ghat where Shankara used to bathe. But the exact place of birth or the house in which he lived cannot be ascertained. Different persons give different versions. From a distance one would imagine that Kaladi must be a place of great Sanskrit culture. But on going to the spot with that idea one is disappointed. Some time back the Government of Travancore started a Sanskrit college, which, I heard, was not well attended. It does not pay nowadays to study Sanskrit. There is a temple which, they say, existed at the time of Shankara; there is another temple which has been latterly built. When one goes to Kaladi one does not find anything spectacular. But if one has got imagination, one is thrilled by the idea that from this place went out one whose voice rang throughout the length and breadth of the country, and which has not died out even now.

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From Kaladi I came to Ernakulam and crossed the backwaters by a boat to Travancore. In the boat I was introduced to one

who was an Indian Christian. The gentleman was a devoutly religious man. He at once became very free with me, and narrated his spiritual struggle. He gets up at early dawn, bathes, and then *meditates*. I found the path he followed was just the one an orthodox Hindu would do, of course leaving aside rituals. I was struck with his genuine hankering for spiritual progress. His divine discontent was great; I felt no doubt that the day was not far when he would be 'filled'. Out of sheer curiosity I asked him whether he attended churches. He said he did not care much for them. He did not find enough inspiration there. I found in him one who was Hindu in outlook but Christian in name. Rather why should one make so much distinction between one and another religion ? Are not all religions the same at bottom ? It is better that one should be given complete freedom about the selection of one's faith.

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As I entered the Travancore State, at every street corner, as it were, I found a church. I felt surprised and pained. Travancore is a Hindu State. In this State the existence of so many churches meant that large numbers of Hindus had embraced Christianity. I would have been very glad if these people had embraced a new faith purely from a religious feeling. No, every church symbolized the tyranny of the caste Hindus to the backward community. Driven to desperation by social oppression and tyranny, the poor and depressed-class people had taken to a new religion, which was eager to increase its numerical strength and as such welcomed them. The Hindu society is living still in a dangerously self-complacent state. There are occurring many big 'landslides' in the Hindu society; even then it thinks it can afford to be indifferent to the problem and continue to be callous to the members of its backward sections. Perhaps the sufferings of the Hindus have not been sufficient to open their eyes. Otherwise they would have become more alert by this time. I understood that the Hindu-Christian problem was as acute in

Malabar as the Hindu-Moslem problem in the North. Everywhere the same story. The Hindus talk of high philosophy, but in action they are weak, disorganized, and disunited and victims of mutual jealousy and hatred !

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At Alwaye I visited an Ashrama started by Narayana guru, the famous saint of the Ezhava (a backward) community. The Ashrama was very nicely kept. It impressed me very much. In the early days Narayana guru also did not escape persecution at the hands of some senseless members of the higher castes. But as his personality began to unfold itself, he compelled respect from those who at first hated and despised him. He was not satisfied with spiritual ministrations only. He started many schools and educational institutions. I understood that the Ezhava community had got a great lift because of him. But he had never a word of curse against those who persecuted him or his community. This is an example of how character tells and how in India social progress can be easily achieved through the help of religion.

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I visited the ancient temple of Sri Krishna at Ambalapuzha. It is said that the famous saint Vilvamangal lived here and worshipped in the temple. The story goes that Vilvamangal, in his early years, fell in love with a courtesan. So much was his fascination for her that one day he came to see her, defying a severe storm and risking his very life. Instead of admiration the situation evoked reprimand from her. The infatuated lover felt the rebuff so much that he turned to religion and afterwards became a famous saint.

The temple is in the compound of an ancient palace. The temple follows the traditional rituals. At noon there was the ceremony of decorating the deity amidst music and playing of drums. A large throng of devotees attended the ceremony. A devout priest was doing the decoration—at first covering the stone image with sandal-paste, then putting on ornaments and jewels. Every time he touched the image he made

some movement of fingers and hands (*mnudra*) in such a way that it was not only artistic but also a very eloquent expression of devotion. Done by a less expert hand, these forms would have become dull and dry, but this man turned a monotonous routine work into a living act of devotion, so much so that the whole atmosphere was surcharged with intense spiritual fervour.

This temple is known as much for its past associations as for a particular kind of porridge which is offered to the deity. The fame of this particular preparation has travelled throughout the whole of Malabar. We did not leave the temple precincts without having partaken of this sacramental dish. But it cost us a heavy price : we were almost going to miss the train at Quilon for Trivandrum, which was my next destination.

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On the way to Quilon, at Haripad, I stopped for a while at a temple where the image of snake is worshipped. The temple has got a very big compound. As I entered the precincts I found large numbers of stone images of snake kept in one place. The main image of snake is in the temple where it is worshipped by a priestess who lives a very austere life. In my young days in the books of Indian history, written by foreigners in a patronizing way, I read that a class of people in Malabar worships snakes ! Here, when I was in the temple, I found so much devotional atmosphere that I could at once feel that an image of snake also might be the symbol of God. Any symbol—a cross, a Kaaba, a fire, an image of a deity—is after all a symbol. It points to the Infinite, but does not exactly denote it. So any symbol is good enough, if it can call up devotional feeling. Now, why the image of snake was particularly chosen as a help to divine worship is a subject of careful historical research and not of cynical criticism. One person was asking me, 'Does the snake represent *Kundalini*, the power which is supposed to be coiled up in the form of a serpent at the bottom of the spinal cord according to yoga theory ? Or is the snake worship the out-

come of a feeling to appease the wrath of snakes which abound in Malabar ? No, one must not bring in a spirit of historical enquiry to disturb the devotional atmosphere of the place. So I bowed down and departed.

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Trivandrum is a small but very beautiful city. Its natural scenery, equable climate, and picturesque setting have invited a lot of visitors and tourists to this capital of a very enlightened Hindu State. The percentage of literacy—specially amongst women—in Travancore is very high, if not the highest in India. Nature also has become bountiful in this area. As one passes through the green fields, big coco-nut gardens, with the view of the sea gleaming here and there, one feels that there is no poverty here. But appearance is sometimes deceptive. I heard that very recently there was a severe famine in a certain part of the State, to combat which the Government had to move its machinery and some private relief agencies also had to work.

At Trivandrum one can see the university, museum, art-gallery, aquarium, a zoological garden,—many such things which are the regular features of a big capital city—but here everything in a proportionately small scale but tastefully kept and tenderly looked after. I visited some of these places which impressed me greatly.

The most important temple in Trivandrum is that of Padmanabha (Sri Krishna in a lying posture), which belongs to the palace. The Maharaja, when he is in the city, attends it every morning. The temple is, however, open to the public. Till recently the Harijans were barred from entering the temple. But some time ago, by a State Proclamation the Harijans were allowed free access to all State-owned or -controlled temples. That was a very bold step. But such is the rigour of orthodoxy, that some orthodox brahmins had, I heard, boycotted the temples where Harijans were allowed entrance. Who are to be more pitied—these brahmins or the Harijans !

I visited the Padmanabha temple. It is kept very neat and clean. In the Travancore

State I found almost all temples were better kept. At least that was the impression I got. It was perhaps due to the fact that there was a separate department in the State to look after the temples. As I stood before the deity, a priest whispered to my companion, who was a local man, that I might not bow down before the deity. I felt surprised at this unusual suggestion. When I asked the reason, I was told that it was the tradition here that whoever bowed before Padmanabha became the property of the deity, and that was a privilege which only the Maharaja enjoyed. The Maharaja was supposed to belong to Padmanabha, the whole State belonged to the deity ; the Maharaja ruled as an agent of God, as a trustee of the divine property. A very noble conception indeed : to work as the instrument of God ! The idea appealed to me greatly.

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From Trivandrum to Cape is a distance of fifty-five miles. There is a good concrete motor road. Arriving at Trivandrum, I was full of joy at the prospect of seeing the Cape. Half of my mind had, as it were, already gone there. I was imagining with my mind's eyes what it would be like. At last, one afternoon, with a companion I started for the Cape. The car glided rapidly over the nice road. At first I passed through the outskirts of the town, then through places looking like semi-towns, then through villages, sometimes through avenues of trees. On the way we were detained at a place called Suchindram, where there was a big temple with *gopurams* six storeys high, whose interior was decorated with fresco paintings. When I left the place, I was a bit alarmed. There were something like eight miles more to cover. If we could not do that in time we might miss the sunset at the Cape. I looked at the watch, I looked at the sun and measured the angle which that great orb would have to sweep before reaching the horizon. The driver, a grave, sombre-looking man but very clever, understood my feelings, and as if in spontaneous sympathy with my anxiety, drove the car as quickly as he possibly could. He was, as it were,

racing with the sun. I heard the roaring of the sea. I got a glimpse of the sea at a distance beyond the sandy beach. Without stopping anywhere the driver took the car just to the spot from where the setting sun could be seen with the best advantage. The sun had already become pale, and was on the point of touching the horizon. We stood mute before it with the vast ocean spreading before us as far as the eyes went. The sun was descending down and down. Its colour was changing every moment, so also that of the sky. We were looking with tense attention at the sun. Now a portion of the sun had gone down, it looked as if it was standing on the sea. Now, half of it had disappeared, it looked semicircular—cut off exactly at the middle. Our eyes were following the sun. Ah, there it had sunk down the horizon. The sky had become variegated with colours, the sea also looked crimson. There was silence all round excepting the roaring of the sea. I stood on the vast stretch of sandy beach. It was evening—when the day met the night. The whole nature, as it were, became composed, one's mind also became quiet as it tended to be in tune with nature. It will be long before I shall forget this beautiful scene.

At the Cape I passed three nights. The view of the sea, the temple comparatively small but kept very neat and clean, the beautiful image of the goddess, everything charmed me, beyond all expectations. In such a spot

you feel like absorbing something not belonging to this mundane existence. You do not feel like talking even to yourself. You want to assimilate the best out of this rare combination of the gifts of nature and man—a quiet spot, a temple with hoary traditions, vast watery expanse before you, and the open sky overhead. You become filled with a longing for the Infinite.

Some one pointed to a rock. It is called 'Vivekananda Rock', because the great Swami Vivekananda, after wandering through the length and breadth of India, came to this place with a bleeding heart, and sitting on that rock meditated on the past and the future of India and devised plans for the regeneration of his motherland.

From day-dreaming I came to stark reality. On one side of India is the gorgeous Himalaya with eternal snow, the very sight of which uplifts you and on another side is the enchanting scenery of the vast ocean which broadens your mind, ennobles your heart, and calls you to lose yourself in the bosom of the Infinite. And in the middle? Well, it is all misery, degradation, poverty, strife, and conflict. This is the present-day India.

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My pilgrimage was over. I thought of return journey, though not without heaving a deep sigh.

20th January 1945

*(Concluded)*

## CREATIVE INDUSTRIAL ART

By J. PATRICK FOULDS

Change is the key-note of life in India today; waves of new and vital energy are surging restlessly and relentlessly against the restraining barriers of custom and inertia which, for so many centuries have stood between India and the development and expression of her immense potentialities, spiritual and material, for the benefit of humanity.

One manifestation of this urge to change is the attitude, only too frequently to be met with, of those who whilst saying 'We have everything to learn from Western civilization' do not realize that possibly the greatest lesson which India may learn from the West is not to tread the same path as the latter, lest she discover for herself equally disastrous pitfalls.

India does not want another industrial revolution—she needs an industrial revelation. With the development and organization of both factory and cottage industries in its present embryonic state, there is an unrivalled opportunity for India to make a creative contribution of great cultural value to the world, through right understanding and application of the principles underlying creative industrial art. The artist who realizes this opportunity needs first to see clearly the present condition of the industrial arts in India, and then to shape a course for their future. To what may this would-be leader look for an indication of this course?

In applied design and ornament the vision of the average Indian artist today does not appear to have penetrated nearer to the heart of his country's potentialities for creative designing than the horridly beribboned excrescences of the Victorian age, or, as a 'modern' alternative, designs of the 'chromium plate' school, inhuman, unbeautiful, uncreative, and untrue. Must he, then, turn away from the West, as it has been misinterpreted in this country, as a source of inspiration for true design, and seek for a lead from the traditional designs of the indigenous crafts? Here again he will be disappointed, for this road leads back into the past, when the designs were created. Then true and vital expressions of the genius of that age in India and Persia, they are now little more than beautiful anachronisms, dying a thousand deaths daily at the hands of manufacturers and craftsmen to whom a design has come to mean little more than a number in an order book, or an old and musty document, a far removed copy of a once vital work of art, bereft of life and significance. (The creation of designs and of new forms of expression consonant with the age in which he lives is the primary function of the artist; the craftsman can only interpret these designs, and when, as has been the case in India, the flow of design from the artist to the craftsman is interrupted, the latter must not be blamed for the inevitable resultant decline in the spontaneity and beauty of his work.)

Textile designing (surely an art in which India should be pre-eminent) affords the artist an almost equally discouraging spectacle of the unhappy combination of Indian inertia and Western mediocrity. The market is flooded with the third-hand products of the Japanese mills, (poor imitations, for the most part, of goods of a standard unsaleable in the West) and textile designers in India today would seem to have set themselves assiduously to copy from these models, so that their country may contribute to the world, to which she gave some of its most glorious textiles, a comparable stream of shoddy.

Commercial and advertising art present, at the moment, a less depressing spectacle. The development of India's industries, and the rising standard of literacy amongst her masses are preparing the way for these legacies from the West, but the large scale advertising campaigns are not yet with us. This is fortunate, because it gives artists who are trying to find a bridge between creative and commercial art an opportunity of studying very carefully the course which the latter has taken in the West, before committing India once more to a form of unconsidered and slavish imitation which will inevitably lead into that Valley of Horrible Mediocrity from which, for all our technical triumphs, we Westerners are but slowly emerging today.

Interior decoration must naturally be closely linked to the prevalent style of architecture, but surely it is neither necessary, desirable, nor inevitable that the offspring of modern Western architecture, ill-adapted to Indian needs, should be the utterly unsuitable and usually untenanted drawing-room, created apparently either in the aspidistra, antimacassar and what-not tradition, or in imitation of the modernized cocktail bar of the local hotel. Here then is a field in which the artist may first ruthlessly eliminate a mass of unbeautiful, because unsuitable, over-elaboration, as well as much of the bare understatement of ill-assimilated westernization. He may learn from the West some of her superb mastery of technical methods, and from the

Indian craftsman his infinite patience and capacity for handling large masses of intricate design ; but he should also learn that creative industrial art, cannot be the outcome of technique pursued for its own sake, the products of which, however exquisitely wrought and finished, will not be a lasting contribution to the world, because they are without soul. In the determination of the lines along which this art is to be developed, he is faced with a harder task than in other forms of industrial art, for here he has no precedent, Western or Indian, to guide him. The prevalence of the artistically atrocious pseudo-Western styles of interior decoration in Indian homes today cannot be taken to mean that the art must necessarily develop along these lines. Nor can the artist of today always find a past tradition in this country, which can be adapted in harmony with modern needs, aesthetic and utilitarian. He will in this case, therefore, have to create a new art form—India must create and give this new art form to the world.

Broadly speaking it may be said that there are only three alternative courses open to the Indian industrial artist today ; he may slavishly copy from the West, he may delve into the design traditions of his own country, or he may strike out in an entirely new direction. Let us consider first the probable result of the extensive imitation of present-day Western industrial art. There, new techniques have been slowly evolved to meet the Western peoples' own needs of self-expression ; until the artist in India has a really creative message to express, the accumulation of imitated complex technical methods is likely to lead him not towards but away from any vital forward step in industrial art. Can he find this message merely by studying the products of Western

countries ? He may be helped by the discriminating pursuit of this study, but he must bear in mind that no really great school of artistic achievement has ever been based on imitation, and that an art which is not the living expression of the intensely individual urge to create is valueless, and will in the long run produce a country which will be second hand. A similar argument applies to the second course indicated, namely, an attempt by industrial artists to adopt and 'bring up to date' ancient India's designs in accordance with modern India's needs. An industrial art revival based on such an attempt would probably be as great a failure as one based solely on the imitation of Western techniques and products, and for the same reasons, unless it were the result not of the concentrated study of relics of the 'glorious past', but of the discovery by each artist for himself of some such unfailing source of inspiration as was, judging from their works, known to its designers.

What is the source of inspiration which could transform India's moribund tradition into constructive creativity ? It springs from the capacity of the artist to retire into his innermost self, there to 'commune with God', and to express with simplicity and faithfulness that which is thus vouchsafed to him. No amount of technical progress or knowledge of past achievements can make up for soullessness in art. This then is the third course which the artists of India may adopt : pausing in their outward searchings, they may look within themselves, whence, if they be really sincere in their wish to express the True in art, Truth will reveal itself to them, and through them, in time, India will receive a new tradition of truly creative industrial arts.

## MAN, SOCIETY, AND HAPPINESS

BY ALFRED GOGERLY MORAGODA

Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan in the course of his Convocation Address at the Vidya-lankara Privena said, 'If you are to set the world right, start with the individual. The world needs today a change in the heart of man—a reconditioning of the human soul. Outward institutions cannot by themselves bring about a regeneration of human nature'.

It seems worth-while to examine the contemporary situation, contemporary criticism, and contemporary hopes for mankind in the light of this philosophy.

The world is just emerging from the throes of war, and man's sensibilities have become so dulled during this period of attrition that the knowledge that it has been possible for human beings to be blasted into detached and quivering fragments, burnt, blinded, and maimed in various battle-fields no longer startles any one.

Though the world is potentially capable of nourishing, clothing, and sheltering every one in it satisfactorily, an alarmingly large proportion of its inhabitants is insufficiently fed, inadequately clothed, and badly housed.

The necessities of life are available, even in small measure, only to those who have some wage-earning job to do—apart, of course, from the leisured classes of lords, lunatics, and lepers. But in spite of an almost universal aversion to unemployment, in the West alone nearly thirty million people were unemployed before this war began. And most of those who have found employment since then have been either preparing munitions of war or making use of them to destroy each other.

Examples, such as man's odd antipathy to tuberculosis closely associated with his perseverance in breeding and disseminating tuberculosis bacteria by his consistent maintenance of slums, can be multiplied to prove

that the contemporary scene is full of the irony of human beings producing what they do not wish to have.

In a situation such as this, contemporary criticism is vehemently directed against established institutions and practices. Man blames the unhappiness visible in the contemporary scene on the inanity of religion and its teachings and the inefficiency of the state and its forms of government. Irreligious and subversive theories of government are fashionable.

A generation is growing to maturity which, we are told by such a discerning observer of the present age as Professor Joad, is generally without belief in religion, without standards in morals, and without interest in the perennial values of truth, beauty, and goodness. The only values which a substantial proportion of this generation is disposed to recognize are those of money and the good material things which cannot be had without money. For they believe that in a society in which every one is equitably supplied with these good things, men will be able to live in happiness.

For purposes of illustration, this article will confine itself to their attitude to religion in relation to this belief. There is a tendency for them to be sneering and harsh in their criticism of religion for its failure, by its inspiration and activity, to achieve such an equitable society and thus bring about a state of happiness on earth for all mankind.

But criticism must be informed by humility if it is to be rescued from becoming mere cynicism. Any person of even less than average intelligence can be 'a sneering fault-finder', as the dictionary defines a cynic.

The quality of humility will enable a man, whom the contemporary scene moves to vehement criticism against religion, to reflect

that religious bodies throughout the world have not, perhaps, been altogether ignorant and careless of the anomalies of life, which he perceives and that, inspired by enthusiasm akin to his to grasp and remould this scheme of things, they may even have done what they could to bring happiness to men on earth, but have been impeded by the limitations of human frailty.

In humility he may be disposed to calculate how little, in fact, he may himself be able to achieve in the short span of his existence in altering the shape of things as he would, and how much he must necessarily fail to accomplish as a consequence of his own human weakness and the complete impossibility of making any material 'change in the hearts' of the mass of mankind.

The attitude of indifference which one adopts towards religion is based essentially on one's appreciation of the imperfections of religious bodies. But these imperfections are but a measure of human imperfection as a whole, and the cultivation of the quality of humility will enable one to see oneself and all human beings as the struggling ants they really are, and to realize the limitations imposed by nature on all human effort.

Those very superior people who stay out of temple and church, walk out of meetings, and keep out of everything connected with religion, in the end die having achieved infinitely less real good in the way of improving the shape of society and the lot of man than the religious bodies which they condemned.

For, considered in the light of human frailty, their achievements should command admiration rather than censure. It is to the poverty of their performance in the social sphere that criticism is chiefly directed. But in spite of the mistakes they may have committed and the things which they may have left undone, being controlled, directed, and administered as they have been, by mere men, prone to error, the inspiration and achievements of religious organizations in implementing the social content of the teachings of their masters, contained, for instance,

in a commandment like that of Jesus that one should love one's neighbour as oneself, may be considered remarkable.

To illustrate by taking the Christian Church for example: it has constantly placed before men the message of love; and its inspiration has been responsible for the passing of humane social legislation like the Poor Laws; the reduction of excessive hours of work; the abolition of slavery, cannibalism, human sacrifices, torture, and cruel punishments; the introduction of better prison systems and more humane treatment of the sinner 'whom', as Oscar Wilde pointed out in gaol, 'Christ came down to save'; the spread of education; the diffusion of moral enlightenment and more satisfactory standards of living among primitive peoples; the initiation of legislation and creation of organizations to prevent cruelty to animals and to protect orphans and destitute children; the provision of care for the deaf and blind and old and infirm; and the inculcation of the missionary spirit in the prevention and cure of sickness and attention to those afflicted with loathsome, infectious diseases.

The teaching and encouragement of the Church and its schoolmen must be considered largely accountable for the downfall of certain tyrannies and despotisms; the overthrow of feudalism and all its objectionable by-products; the awakening in the minds of men, long accustomed to regard themselves as inferior by class or caste to certain others, of the realization that all men are equal in the eyes of God; and their activity, as a consequence of this awakening, to seek and obtain equal rights and privileges for all men on earth.

The Church has placed before men the highest standards of honesty, morality and upright conduct, and fearless resistance to expressions of evil; and surely one of the most admirable things of our time is the stand taken by certain Protestant and Catholic clergy against European dictators, and their demonstration that man's ultimate appeal should be to something other than human might.

These European dictators with all their assembled might have failed completely in their assaults on those fortified by spiritual power even as they have failed in their own material ambitions. And contemporary hopes for mankind have to be considered in the light of such convincing evidence of the vanity of human might.

In this light the point may well be considered whether the contemporary idea of progress towards an era of peace and happiness on earth, brought about by human effort, is not an illusion. For the time seems to be at hand when human endeavour whether it admits any inspiration and aid in the direction from religion or not, will have achieved a world in which man's material needs like food, clothes, houses, medical attention, and education, would be equitably available to all men.

But no one should mistake such an age of material comfort for an era of bliss beyond compare for all mankind. It would be well to remember one's millionaire friend, whose material comforts are amply satisfied even in this present age. One does not always find him the personification of joy and peace. In fact, one often finds him quite gloomy, sulky and unhappy, possibly over sonic difference of opinion he may have had with his wife about some trivial matter like the choice of the guests who should be invited to his birthday party, or a more momentous matter like her preoccupation with some one who may ultimately supplant him in her affection. He may even commit suicide—and this in spite of his having all the material good things of life in abundance.

The provision of these good things to all men will not, therefore, automatically 'set the world right' and bring about happiness and contentment so long as there is no 'change in the heart of man', and man remains intrinsically the same sort of animal, in possession of all his present sins and weaknesses, except perhaps such 'economic' vices as the dishonesty which breeds theft, which an age of plenty for all may remove.

The contemporary hope of progress towards

some Utopia, therefore, appears to be illusory. After all 'progress' is a new idea. The ancients put their golden age in the past, and even one's rustic countryman in Ruhuna may still hark back to the golden age of Duttagemunu. Civilizations rise, but civilizations also fall.

With the modern aspiration for a Utopia based on material comforts the superstition of progress has, however, gained some homage, inspired by the liberal ideas of the rights of man springing from the French Revolution and by the marvellous industrial development and mechanical inventions of the present century and the last.

This homage will, however, hardly survive the disillusionment which will follow on the realization that an era of plenty is not necessarily an era of peace. There is so much pain and bitterness in the impact of one individual's personality, his mind, spirit and character, on another's, and the forces of lust and fear and pride and jealousy and selfishness are so strong in men that there is always, in the nature of things, the intrinsic possibility of a relapse into a new kind of dark age and no political or economic programme to alter the shape of society will be enough to bring about an age of peace and happiness on earth for all mankind.

For the happiness of the individual members of a society results entirely from the nature of the inner self of each individual. Outward institutions cannot provide this. It is not something which springs from the nature of the society or the community of which one is a member. Changes in the shape of the society or the methods of government cannot bring this about, though they may contribute to the external comfort and well-being which religious organizations no less than secular institutions have, as illustrated above, exerted themselves, to provide within the limitations imposed by human nature and in the face of the indifference of mankind to ethical teachings.

It is only a change in the heart of each man that can bring him happiness, which is something apart from the enjoyment of the

material good things of this world. From the standpoint of 'robust rationalism', as Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan put it, 'whatever religion one adopts, one comes to the definite conclusion that this world cannot give one any stability, it cannot give one any kind of

bliss. One attains the blissful state only when one surrenders one's individuality'.

This is the end of religion.

There may be something in religion, after all, if it can give a man a peace that passeth all understanding.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

Swami Vivekananda's plan of work and service for the regeneration of India is clearly explained by *Swami Shivananda* in the course of *Conversations* in this number. For the benefit of our new readers, we may mention that Swami Shivananda was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and the second President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission.....St Nihal Singh continues his very interesting *Backward Glance at Prabuddha Bharata's Fifty Volumes*.....Pandit Jaiwant Ram, an educationist of several years' standing, compares the Vedantic principles of pedagogy with those of modern times, and shows how much we owe to India's past, and how much more we have to learn by a careful study of it, in *The Vedantic Conception of Education*....*The Culture and Religion of the Yorubas of West Africa* by Sj. Suniti Kumar Chatterji of the Calcutta University is a highly illuminating article depicting the admirable art and civilization of one of the most advanced peoples of Africa. This interesting description of their culture and religion leaves no doubt that these native inhabitants of Africa are neither 'savage' nor 'backward' as some Westerners represent them to be....The learned 'Wanderer' completes the fascinating account of his journey *From the Himalayas to Cape Comorin* by taking us to the beautiful temple of Kanya Kumari at the junction of the three seas....Major J. Patrick Foulds discusses the necessity of Indians developing originality along the lines

of Indian tradition in art and its application to industry in *Creative Industrial Art*.....In *Man, Society, and Happiness*, Mr. Mora-goda makes a passionate plea for well balanced views on life.

### AIM OF RELIGION

Man is drifting away from moral and religious standards, guided more by considerations of expediency. Scientific inventions and material wealth have overawed humanity. The estrangement from religion is so complete that intelligent men are beginning to doubt its utility in the present-day scheme of life. Persons, who should have known better, ask 'What has religion led to? Has it brought us any nearer freedom? Has religion contributed to the progress of India materially, economically, or scientifically?' In answer, another would say, 'Have science, politics, or commercial advancement ushered in a golden era for humanity? Is religion responsible for the lack of freedom of the smaller nations in Europe and Asia? Wars of attrition, Frankenstein's monsters, international competition in trade and commerce, and subjugation of the weak by the strong—are these the signs of progress which religion is supposed to hinder?' It is unfortunate that these 'utilitarians' who go for religion have not transcended the puerile standards of a baby which says, 'Does astronomy bring me gingerbread? If it does not, then astronomy is useless.' The powerful Christian nations have not found it necessary to throw off religious values *in toto*; nor have China and Japan sought to renounce their respec-

tive religions in order to achieve progress and strength. Religion does not pretend and has never pretended, to remove the poverty of or to bring material prosperity to its votaries. On the contrary, it brings to man eternal life. That religion is a call to man to change the fundamentals of life, to transform the self into an entirely different kind of pattern, was stressed by Sir S. Radhakrishnan in the course of an illuminating discourse at the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta. Sir Radhakrishnan deplored the modern man's dilettantish interest in the abiding values of life. It has become the fashion to attack religion as unprogressive and antisocial, and hold it responsible for all the ills of humanity. Such ignorant criticism often comes from persons who lack the desire to know the truth, who are excessively attached to things of the world, and who are unable to understand and practise self-control.

The importance of religion to human society is better understood when we look at those nations in whom religion occupies a minor place and materialism holds sway. They are reverting to the old barbaric ways of ruthless extermination of their so-called enemies. There is no restraining influence on the extent to which racial discrimination, bellicose patriotism, and religious intolerance are encouraged and practised. As Sir Radhakrishnan has pointed out,

Science undoubtedly had done a great deal towards combating diseases and annihilating disease. But it had not been able to conquer the primitive instincts of human beings, like jealousy and greed. In spite of the great advance which science has made, it did not throw much light on the questions, 'where we come from and where we go'.

Hence science, divorced from religion, is not enough. Nor is it safe in the hands of erring humanity. The present war is a clear pointer to this.

Man had to be evolved and grown into a larger consciousness. And the growth hereafter had not to be in the physical frame of man. The development they were after was to be on the psychological plane, in the world of mind and spirit... For that discipline was necessary, and that discipline was supplied to them by what was called religion... Religion asked everybody to look at the way into which evolution had operated in the past and to apply the lessons of evolution of

the past to the future growth of human consciousness. (*Hindustan Standard*)

The most fundamental doctrine of Vedanta affirms that the soul of man contains all perfection within itself and that the manifestation of the divinity within man is the end and aim of religion. Once again it has to be clearly understood that religion does not consist in blind belief or dogmatic assertion or ritualistic ceremonies. It is a life of practical utility coupled with true renunciation. It is absurd to want to know whether religion is of any use to earn one's livelihood or to amass wealth. Man does not live by bread alone, though religion may appear a mockery to a starving man. The utility of religion is not to be judged by economic or political standards. It is common knowledge that men love to enjoy sense pleasures and generally prefer to live in security and comfort. Few, indeed, are those who renounce selfishness and overcome the limitations of their little selves, in order to gain infinite peace and blessedness. To such persons there is no more distress or dejection, and there is nothing which they deem highly of,—'having obtained which, (he) regards no other acquisition superior to that, and where established (he) is not moved even by heavy sorrow'. (Gita) Nor is it correct to say religion is antisocial and makes man indifferent to his fellow men. Then it is not religion but mental perversion and sanctimony masquerading as religion. As Sir Radhakrishnan said, the truly religious man would throw himself, with all his energy and sacrifice, into the work of the world.... It was religion which said that man must recast his thoughts, enlarge his consciousness, and evolve the nobility of the human race. A truly religious man was interested in the welfare of every human being.

#### 'NOT FOR SUNDAY USE ONLY'

Preaching at St. Jude's, Hampstead Garden City, Sir Stafford Cripps said :

It is in the nature of man that he should spend an hour or so, away from his exacting work, to go to a church and tell the congregation his views on the nature of Real Values, and how they should be applied to victory and peace. Our religious principles are all right for Sunday use, but we are inclined to ask, whoever really thought they were meant to be applied to business, politics, or economics,

Sir Stafford was rather outspoken in exposing the superficiality of the fashionable and comfortable type of religion desired by those who care more for 'practical results' than for unshakable principles. Fearing the rigours of religious discipline, most people assume an evasive attitude towards religion. This is more common in the West where spirituality, and even morality, are connected with worldly prosperity. To the Westerner religion is a formal relation with God to whom he prays on a Sunday or on other ceremonial occasion. The most profound and noble teachings of Christ are but imperfectly understood and still more imperfectly practised by those nations who profess to follow Christianity. Deploring this 'Sunday religion' and calling upon his congregation to follow the teachings of Christ more intensely, Sir Stafford Cripps observed :

The world, dazed by its own misfortunes, hankers after a clear and decisive lead. In my belief, it is only those who believe passionately in the teachings of Christ who can give that lead. We must permeate our whole lives with His teaching, and we must regulate our every action by His principles. If only all those who profess and call themselves Christians could combine to insist upon the Real Values as the test of all national and international policies, we could transform the world in the course of a few decades.

Of course, religion has its cultural and secular aspects too. It should so influence and guide our secular activities as to make these lead us directly or indirectly to the final realization of the goal of life. Unfortunately, organized Christianity, though ostensibly propagating Christian ethics, does, in practice, encourage churchiness and conversion. The emphasis has shifted from spirituality to proselytizing zeal and cultural conquest. It is a very happy sign to find that a distinguished politician like Cripps has urged his co-religionists to cultivate spiritual values and offer prayers not merely for victory over the enemy but for divine inspiration and guidance from day to day. He said :

One historical fact is abundantly clear, that our concentration upon material values has led us into the most appalling tragedies, and bids fair to destroy all

that we value in our civilization. We know the divine answer to our troubles given in Christ's teaching, but we have, so far, not had the courage to make those teachings the guiding principles of our everyday life. I have had some little experience in the last fifteen years of political, social, and economic problems, and the more I have seen of the difficulties the more convinced have I become that the one way to their solution lies along the road of practical Christianity. (*Illustrated Weekly of India*)

Religion, not based on renunciation and spirituality, or wrongly applied to life, is occasionally seen to produce unfortunate results. Wars have been waged in the name of religion. Instead of exerting a salutary influence on secular life and leading men to spiritual illumination, ministers of religion often join hands with politicians. Religion degenerates into a weak and soulless formality which is incapable of arresting the growth of unrighteous civilization based on exploitation and aggrandizement. By not insisting upon spirituality and morality, Christianity has failed to prevent the perpetration, by Christian nations, of acts that are the exact opposite of Christ's teaching. As Aldous Huxley rightly remarks :

'The church allows people to believe that they can be good Christians and yet draw dividends from armament factories, can be good Christians and yet imperil the well-being of their fellows by speculating in stocks and shares, can be good Christians and yet be imperialists, yet participate in war'. (*Ends and Means*, p. 209.) Christianity, though glorious in many respects, has yet to be properly understood and practised by the West. So far as it is understood, it has proved insufficient to satisfy the spiritual hunger of man. Signs of world-weariness are becoming painfully predominant in the West. No amount of political or social manipulation of human conditions can cure the evils of life. The essential function of religion is to awaken in men the consciousness of the spiritual oneness of humanity. Spiritual awakening and ethical culture alone can change present racial tendencies for the better. \*

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**SIDELIGHTS.** By SAKA. Published by Language Publications, 12, Thambu Chetty Street, Madras. Pp. 180. Price Rs. 2.

The publishers deserve great commendation for bringing out, in book-form, the selected writings of Mr. Khusa Subba Rau, the popular writer and well-known journalist of South India. These 'sidelights' were written under the literary pseudonym 'Saka', at different times, and appeared in the papers with which he was associated as editor. Herein is presented a collection of writings of a variety and quality rarely to be met with. Though short, the sketches and articles are remarkably interesting and informative. The writings included in this volume are divided under three parts. In the first part are brought together fascinating and intimate pen-pictures of twenty-seven prominent persons, some of whom are less widely known. Some of the more familiar names among these are Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. Jinnah, Mr. Savarkar, Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, Sir Mirza Ismail, and Mr. G. A. Natesan. In recording his brief but masterly study of each one of these persons, Mr. Subba Rau has written freely and fearlessly. Naturally there is appreciation as well as criticism. The second part is devoted mainly to journalism. Being a veteran journalist, he is at his best here. In short essays, he discusses the standards of journalism, the vagaries of the press in India, the ways of Indian and English editors, and the merits of good writing. The third part is a medley of such entertaining topics as culture, birthdays, marriage, divorce, oratory, films, and patriotism. The ease and felicity with which he treats of these diverse subjects are admirable. His writings reveal a genuine, though subdued, love for the motherland. For example, writing on 'Patriotism' he says: 'The glorification of elements associated with subjection has become part and parcel

of our very existence. In a city like Madras, memorials to foreign greatness abound everywhere, and appreciation of things Indian is sparse and furtive. Our biggest thoroughfares are conceived in honour of English names. Even our sports trophies are monuments to non-Indian prowess, and in the naming of them Willingdon counts for more than Amar Singh. In this land of parties, the one party lacking is a party of patriots to whom nothing else in the world counts before country, a party pledged to independence and opposed to subjection in any form with no love for ethical abstractions and academic disputations, and no quarter for communalists and place-hunters.' His impressive and pleasant style is a great treat to the readers. Fervent appreciation, ingenuous criticism, penetrating insight, and ironical yet dignified humour mark these writings of 'Saka'. We have no doubt the book will be widely read. The printing is excellent, and the get-up quite good under the present conditions.

**A GLIMPSE INTO GANDHIJI'S SOUL.** Six Woodcuts By DHIREN GANDHI. Published by International Book House, Ltd., Bombay. Price Rs. 3-8.

Gandhiji successfully completed a three-week fast in February 1943 while under detention in the Aga Khan's palace in Poona. In the words of Gurdial Malik, 'the present series of six woodcuts portrays, in the poetry of pictures, the basis and the background of the fast'. The sketches are highly suggestive of the deep significance of some of the touching scenes witnessed during the fast. They are well executed by one who is intimately connected with Gandhiji and has had the rare opportunity of closely studying him. The last four drawings bear directly upon the fast, while the first shows Gandhiji in prayer and the second shows him paying a visit to the place of cremation of Mahadev Desai. The publishers have done their part admirably well.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, KANKHAL

#### REPORT FOR 1944

The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal, Hardwar, established in the year 1901, has completed the forty-fourth year of its useful existence. Notwithstanding war-time handicaps, the Sevashrama has been able to carry on successfully its service in the cause of suffering humanity. The total number of cases treated during the year under review was 29,601, of which 28,965 were outdoor cases and 1,336 indoor cases. The daily average of attendance, including both the departments, was 106. The number of surgical operations performed in the course of the year was 229.

The night-school for depressed-class adults and boys, conducted by the Sevashrama, had 50 pupils on the rolls at the end of the year. The Sevashrama library,

containing over 2,500 volumes, was freely made use of by the local public. The birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was duly celebrated when over 1,400 poor people, including members of the depressed classes, were sumptuously fed.

Some of the needs of the institution are: (1) Rs. 10,000 for underground drainage (with sanitary arrangements); (2) Rs. 7,000 for kitchen block with store-room and dining-hall; (3) Rs. 7,000 for land and building for night-school; (4) Many beds in the indoor hospital have not been endowed, and the cost of endowing a bed is Rs. 6,000; (5) Rs. 1,500 for an electric pump for the main well. But the immediate problem is to meet the abnormal situation created by the war, and the Secretary of the Sevashrama makes an appeal to the public for a sum of at least Rs. 15,000 urgently needed to purchase essential hospital requisites. Contributions may be sent to the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, P. O. Kankhal, District Saharanpur, U. P.

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. L.

NOVEMBER, 1945

No. 11



“उत्तिष्ठत जापत प्राप्य वराण्डिवोधत ।”

“Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI SHIVANANDA

Dry periods in spiritual life—Tenacity—*Japa* and constant remembrance of the Lord—Self-control and discrimination—Pilgrimage to holy places—Life of an itinerant monk—Practice of dependence upon the Lord—Rules of monasticism—Ramakrishna monks, a new type—Essentials of monasticism, renunciation of lust and greed.

(Place: *Belur Monastery*. Time: *September 1923*.)

Saturday. Swami Shivananda was seated in his room at the monastery at Belur, his face beaming with spiritual fervour, his eyes radiating love and compassion. There was profound peace in the room. Since it was Saturday, several devotees came from Calcutta for a visit. Most of them were young men working in offices who made it a custom to avail themselves of every holiday to come to the monastery to see Mahapurushji and listen to him. From his precious words of wisdom they drew much inspiration. That day the conversation turned upon spiritual practice.

A devotee said: ‘Maharaj, on some days I enjoy my meditation, but on other days I do not. What accounts for this?’

The Swami replied: ‘Yes, truly it happens like this. For some days we enjoy meditation, but other days come when we do not. In the initial stage all aspirants have to go through this experience, but one should not stop practice for that reason. Did not the

Master speak of the hereditary farmer? Even as he sticks to the family profession, so you must stick to your spiritual practice and in trying periods pray fervently to the Lord. Say: “Lord, we are in the world, we are weak and devoid of spiritual discipline and practice. We have neither time nor energy. We have none else to call our own. Do Thou graciously set our mind right that we may call upon Thee properly. Feeble as we are, unless Thou givest us strength, how shall we think of Thee?” Pray to God thus, my boy. Prayer, earnest prayer, is what is necessary. Cry to Him as you pray. Then He will be gracious, and respond.

‘Don’t you remember how the Master used to pray to the Mother? He would rub his face against the ground, crying, “Another day of this life is gone and I have not seen Thee!” How ardently did Sri Chaitanya say, “O Lord, I find no joy in repeating Thy name!” Crying thus, he too would rub his

face on the grass. One should take the name of the Lord in this way with great earnestness. His name, my child, is the very essence. Repeating it brings strength to one's heart. Never forget to repeat His name and pray to Him constantly."

Devotee : 'Can one take His name always, as for instance, while walking ?'

Swami : 'Certainly. *Japa* is not bound by temporal considerations. You can repeat His name whenever you find time. While walking repeat it mentally, you cannot then count the repetition on your fingers or rosary without being conspicuous. The repetition of the Lord's name must be practised very secretly so that no one knows anything about it.'

'Practise constant recollection and contemplation of God. One has to form the habit. Remember and think of Him continually, while walking, eating, lying down, and even when you are actively busy. Let it be as if an undercurrent is all the time flowing. If you practise in this manner for a while, remembrance and contemplation of Him will go on unconsciously within you ; you will be repeating His name even while asleep.'

Devotee : 'It is so hard to control the mind ! Sometimes when I am telling my beads, uttering His name orally, my mind wanders here and there, indulging in ideas I never before thought of.'

Swami : 'That is true. The rascal mind causes all the trouble. You must control this mind, or it will take you here and there. However, sincere efforts will bring self-control. When disciplined, this wicked mind behaves right ; it functions as the guru, repeats His name, guides the aspirant along righteous ways and gives him inspiration in noble undertakings. Practise self-control constantly, pray sincerely to the Lord, and discriminate between the real and the unreal. My child, self-control cannot be accomplished in a day. Rightly has the Lord said in the Gita :

Doubtless, O mighty-armed, the mind is restless and difficult to control ; but, O son of Kunti, through practice and dispassion it can be conquered.

Practice, continual practice, and discrimina-

tion are what is needed. God alone is the one eternal substance, the abiding reality. It is necessary to be fully convinced of this in one's heart.'

As the conversation progressed, Swami Shivananda gradually became indrawn. Very soon he fell silent, with eyes closed in meditation. After remaining a while, one by one the devotees started leaving for devotions in the chapel or on the bank of the Ganges.

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Tuesday. About 7.30 this morning Swami Shivananda had just returned from the chapel. Nowadays he meditates long in the morning. At the very hour of dawn, when Sri Ramakrishna is first offered worship, the Swami goes to the chapel with a deer-skin and sits there on it meditating. Sometimes it is quite late in the morning when he returns to his room. Today, after coming from the chapel, he was seated in his chair. The intoxication of meditation lingered, and he seemed still very much absorbed. The monks and novitiates of the Order as well as the lay devotees came to pay their respects to him. He greeted them and made inquiries about their well-being very briefly, as if he were in no mood to carry on conversation.

A monk of the Order returned only yesterday from a pilgrimage to Rameshwar, Dwarka, and other holy places. The moment this monk entered and saluted him, Mahapurushji, with folded hands, bowed to God, saying, 'Glory be unto Lord Rameshwar, glory be unto the Lord of Dwarka !' Addressing the monk, the Swami continued : 'Meditate upon these subjects. When you meditate, try to think of what you saw in holy places. This is certainly the object of going on pilgrimages. If one undertakes them like a tourist, he gains nothing from them. Genuine devotees purify their minds by recalling and meditating on such things. It is the Lord who has become everything. The holy places are indeed His glories. While thinking of Him one should also think of the manifestations of His power. In holy places there is a special manifestation of Him. He

is not seated in our chapel only. He, the Lord of the Universe, is all-pervasive and exists everywhere, but He is specially manifest in holy places and in His saints and devotees.'

Monk : 'After my little wandering this time, the conviction has become deep-rooted in my mind that He is specially manifest in holy places, and I have truly understood that at every step, He holds us by the hand and protects us. I remained for three days at Kanyakumari (Cape Comorin) and enjoyed my stay very much. I used to spend considerable time in meditation, *japa*, worship, and reading. So exquisitely beautiful was the place, that it was difficult to leave. Through the grace of the Lord, in an unaccountable way, excellent arrangements were made for my lodging.'

Swami : 'Once in a while one should go out and live the life of an itinerant monk, dependent solely on the Lord. That is how genuine resignation is acquired. Without this resignation to God, nothing can be accomplished. All the spiritual practices and disciplines have one aim, to develop resignation. He who seeks refuge at the feet of the Lord with undivided mind is fully taken care of and protected by Him. That is why in the Gita the Lord promises :

Those who worship Me and meditate upon Me without any other thought—to these ever steadfast devotees I carry what they lack and preserve what they have.

Gradually the conversation turned upon monasticism and the life of a monk. A newly initiated sanyasi said : 'Maharaj, please tell us the rules and codes that we should observe as monks. While conducting works of service it is not practicable to abide by the orthodox monastic rules and regulations mentioned in the *Paramahansa* and *Narayana Upanishads*. Last evening we had a discussion on this subject with Swami Suddhananda.'<sup>1</sup>

Swami : 'Yes, there are many monastic rules of the kind you mention, but since they are not meant for you, it is not necessary for you to observe them. You represent a differ-

ent type of monk, a combination of Karma Yogi and sanyasi. Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) has left a new ideal for you. You are expected, in addition to your spiritual practice, dispassionately to carry on activities conducive to spirituality. Naturally it is not practicable for you to observe the rules of which you speak, literally. They are meant for sanyasis who do not believe in any activity other than exclusive contemplation, self-analysis, and discrimination. But you know, my child, if one is true in the essentials, the rest will take care of itself.'

Monk : 'Maharaj, what are the essentials ?'

Swami : 'They are renunciation of lust and gold. If one can renounce lust of the flesh and greed for wealth everything will be all right. What counts is not the mere renunciation of external attachments; inner attachments must also be given up. Remember that at the time of your monastic vow you offered oblations in the sacred fire, symbolically making a holocaust of desires. At the base of all desires are lust and greed. Above everything else a monk should observe the vow of chastity and poverty. Be sincerely resigned to the Lord. He will give you all knowledge. In time everything will be revealed through His grace.'

Monk : 'But Maharaj, so long as the body lasts should one not have some desire for self-preservation ?'

Swami : 'Yes, he should. The scriptures contain injunctions to that effect. In the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* there is a passage which says, "Realizing the Self and renouncing desires for progeny, wealth, and popularity, the knowers of Brahman take to the life of itinerant monks subsisting on alms". One can have that much desire as is absolutely necessary for self-preservation. Begging for alms should provide only bare necessities. Nowhere do the scriptures say that a monk should have sumptuous meals or live in luxury. The main object of self-preservation is to be able to call upon the Lord wholeheartedly and to do works in his service—that is all.'

<sup>1</sup> A senior monk of the Order.

Monk : 'Well, Maharaj, is it possible for dualists to practise renunciation ?'

Swami : 'Why not ? Renunciation means doing away with the three foremost desires.'

A devotee accepting the dualistic view renounces all desires except the desire for God. He alone is to be desired in life. The desire to realize Him is not really a desire at all.'

## SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE—II

BY THE EDITOR

### I

There is a school of thought which holds that *vairagya* even in its merely negative aspect is superior to a life of mere worldliness. They ask : Even if we are not blessed with the vision of God, and true love for Him, is it not better to be free from the enslaving clutches of anger, greed, and lust ? It certainly seems a better course to continue struggling upwards rather than accept defeat; because one has failed to realize God, one need not, in a fit of despair, throw himself into the hands of Satan. Most people, however, think that, since realization of God is not sure or so easy, it is better to plunge into the pleasures of the world and make merry while life and youth last. Alas, how misguided we are ! As if drunkenness could ever be cured by greater addiction to drunkenness !

By a sincere practice of *vairagya* even in its negative aspect, the mind is turned back on itself, has to gradually fall back on its own resources, and at last attains the state of cessation of all desires, more and more peace, nirvana. This is the path followed by Buddhism, which does not require the conception of a personal God as necessary for the attainment of spiritual freedom. This is the path followed by the *jnanis* of the Vedantic school of thought, whose aim is also the formless and unmanifested nature of Reality.

### II

It is fashionable nowadays among politically-minded people and others 'en-

grossed with the concerns of only this life and this world to designate *vairagya* as but a method of 'escapism', a running away from the real problems of life, and trying to live in a world of make-believe. It has been criticized as akin to the method of the day-dreamer, the drunkard, and the opium-eater, who find in the oblivion of the outside world and the attendant pleasant dreams a suicidal substitute for escaping from the worries and difficulties of life into an intoxicated state of pleasant wish-fulfilment.

But this charge of 'escapism' against the advocates of *vairagya* is but a cheap gibe hurled at religion. It is the result of an imperfect study and understanding of the true nature of the aims and methods of religion. A seeker after religious truth is no more an 'escapist' than the professor in his study, or the scientist in his laboratory, or the artist in his studio. Nobody would call Einstein an 'escapist', and yet how far removed he is from the actual toils and turmoils of this world ! Similarly the withdrawing from the ordinary activities of the world by a spiritual aspirant is but a step of preparation, a retreat for gathering strength to overcome finally the sources of all grief and sorrow by gaining right knowledge which will lead to right action. To earn money, to marry and to beget—these do not form the dominating impulse or aim in the life of the spiritual aspirant. The unregenerate man runs after money and the enjoyments of the flesh like a wild beast after its prey. His instincts and passions are so strong that his brain is unable even to entertain the idea that there can be a

higher purpose in human life. To such people the man who refuses to wallow in the mire of sense-attachment, who refuses to be stampeded into following the actions of the herd may indeed seem an 'escapist', one who is not like themselves, but a strange creature who will not identify himself with the aims and methods of the 'masses', but wants to reach after something different. Psychically unable to comprehend that it is possible for a man to rise above the enslaving allurements of the senses, the protagonists of worldliness seek to dub the votaries of religious truth as extremely selfish, as men morbidly concerned with the salvation of their own souls, and dead to all the nobler instincts of sympathy and service of humanity. But sublimation of the instincts brings with it not degeneracy, as some of these learned critics would claim, but a higher birth ; not a falling down into the hell of greater selfishness, but a rise into the unlimited and bright regions of self-ness; a loss of the personal idea of self, and an entrance into the higher realm of selflessness. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' Wherever and whenever a person has been imbued with the true religious spirit, we always find, as a matter of objective experience, not a contraction of the self but an expansion of the self; not a retreat from the world's forbidding frowns, but a sharing with the world the sorrow-dispelling fruits of spiritual truth. Man lives not by bread alone.

### III

Is the charge of 'escapism' levelled against religion entirely without foundation, then ? The answer is 'yes', if the charge is levelled against the true religious aspirant. But against a certain class of people this charge may be made with some degree of justice. These are the pseudo-religious misanthropes, who under the cloak of religion want to drag on a weary existence, because life has denied them their heart's desires. They take to religion, not because they have been satiated with the enjoyments of the world, but because they are unable to obtain in full

measure, or in any measure at all, the means for a full-blooded worldly life. Confronted by the terrifying responsibilities of their past unrestrained conduct, or burdened by a cruel fate with incapacities and troubles beyond their power of endurance, and unable to face these squarely like brave, patient, honest men, they cut the Gordian knot of all their troubles by taking shelter for the moment under a false *vairagya*. But such people are not really seekers after spiritual truth. They are like insolvents taking shelter under the Law of Insolvency. Like economic insolvents, these spiritual insolvents will go back to their old ways of life, once they have managed to secure a respite from their overwhelming cares and troubles. But critics of religion must be careful to sift the wheat from the chaff, if their remarks are to be just and fair.

### IV

Of all religions Hinduism has been the greatest opponent of 'escapism' of all kinds, economic, political, or religious. With a truly cosmic vision, it understands correctly the individual human being's place in the scheme of things, and urges on him a strenuous fulfilment of all his duties and responsibilities. The doctrines of the Law of Karma, and of Reincarnation indicate the futility of any attempt to escape the results of one's past actions except through intelligent and indefatigable efforts to nullify their effects by present actions. Personal responsibility for any action cannot be evaded by any means so long as the individual feels and knows he is the doer. The laws of the spiritual order of the world seem to be as rigorous as those of the physical, and even if a man seems to escape, apparently, the punishment for his evil deeds in this world, he is but postponing the day of reckoning. Such a philosophy gives but scant support for 'escapism', especially in the religious field. The Bhagavad Gita, one of the noblest religious scriptures of the world, is a long sermon, from beginning to end, against 'escapism'. Arjuna is exhorted to die fighting

like a warrior, and not to run away from the performance of his duties. We strongly recommend to all those who glibly talk of religious 'escapism' to study the Gita, and assimilate its teaching. Then they will learn that, while 'escapism' is bad enough, 'modernism' or the plunging headlong into an unrestricted orgy of titillation of the senses with war, women, and wine and all their concomitants is a greater danger to the future of human civilization,—a danger which right-minded men ought to join together to combat by all the forces in their control.

## V

*Vairagya* is a positive force. Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, I. 15, says : 'Non-attachment is the state of the mind in which one becomes conscious of one's power of control of the objects of enjoyment. This power comes as the effect of giving up the thirst for enjoying objects of the senses, either seen or heard.' It is the absence of the thirst for all enjoyments of this world or any other world, now or at any other time that leads to the power born of self-control. This develops in the individual a spiritual strength that automatically saves him in the path of spiritual progress. There are two forces called *avarani shakti* and *vikshepa shakti*, which lead to delusion and activity of all sorts, and obscure the clear vision of God. Individualized experience is the result of the interplay of these forces. These create the whole universe as it appears to the individual by making the Self somehow appear as identified with the non-self. As Shankara says in

a beautiful verse : Of the tree of *samsara* ignorance is the seed, the identification with the body is its sprout, attachment its tender leaves, work its water, the body its trunk, the vital forces its branches, the organs its twigs, the sense-objects its flowers, various miseries due to diverse works are its fruits, and the individual soul is the bird on it (*Vivekachudamani*, 145). This bondage of the non-self springs from the deluding or blinding force of *avarani shakti* which makes one identify himself with the various states of the *buddhi*. Then *vikshepa shakti* or the power that makes a man act, begins its work; his mind, by attachment to outside things, becomes filled with greed and lust, and then he begins drifting up and down in the boundless ocean of *samsara*, now sinking, now rising, in its bitter waters of sense enjoyment. *Vairagya* destroys the power of these fettering forces. To quote Swami Vivekananda, 'the worldly-minded teach us that the attainment of sense enjoyments is the highest ideal in life and in course of time that appears to us as a tremendous temptation. To deny one's self of such enjoyments and not allow the mind to come to wave forms with regard to them is renunciation.... Such waves of the mind should be controlled by me, and not I by them—this sort of mental strength is what is called renunciation or *vairagya* and that is the only way to freedom.' By *vairagya* the spiritual aspirant comes to know in the fulness of time that he is the Self,—pure, of the essence of everlasting unalloyed bliss, indwelling, supreme, effulgent. Then he realizes the truth of the scriptural saying 'That thou art'.

It is by means of reason that one comes to the knowledge of truth ; and by means of truth that he gets the peace of his mind ; and it is the tranquillity of the mind that dispels the misery of men.

to the knowledge of truth ; and by means of truth that he gets the peace of his mind ; and it is the tranquillity of the mind that dispels the misery of men.

—*Yogavasishtha*

## BACKWARD GLANCE AT PRABUDDHA BHARATA'S FIFTY VOLUMES

BY ST. NIHAL SINGH

(Continued)

Women walked into the pages and out of them, as they do in the home and in life. With some of them—Sati, Savitri, and the like—I had been, I thought, almost as familiar as I was with my mother and sisters : but the sketches, after all only thumb-nail, added to my store of knowledge details that were as essential to my understanding of the ideality of these beings as they were to me ennobling.

There was more, however, to the notes, articles, and interviews pertaining to women—some from the pen of a woman, not of our blood but (what is even better) of our faith, of whom I shall speak. They drove home, at least to my mind, a fact, unpleasant—ugly. Measured by what we said of women and what we did to them and did not do for them, our degeneracy was abysmal. We excused ourselves by citing some dogma. It formed part, however, of some superstition that then passed as Hinduism. It was largely *puranic*—post-Buddhistic in origin.

The original Aryan, the pristinely pure, canon, had laid down the principle that 'a man cannot perform a religious action without a wife'.<sup>11</sup> As, however, Maharshi Dayananda Sarasvati had pointed out, a wife was these days considered so degraded as to be debarred from even touching 'the *Saligram-Shila*'.<sup>12</sup> adored as the Lord Shiva's veritable image.

To man, Vivekananda gave but 'one right' (mark the word) in woman's domain—to educate woman. The rest he left to her. 'Women must be put', he ordained, 'in a position to solve their own problems in their

own way'. This, he insisted, 'no one can or ought to do....for them'.<sup>13</sup>

This concept of Swami Vivekananda was new to most of my contemporaries. It remains, I fear, even now new : for few of us who delight in calling ourselves men, have yet caught up with a standard raised for us in 1898 ! It is to me, however, a pleasure to add that even half a century ago Vivekananda was convinced of the 'Indian women's' capacity to re-order their own lives and (I may add) by so doing, re-order ours.

Vivekananda carried the interviewer down a vast number of steps to the Rajarshi Janaka's court.<sup>14</sup> There sat the erudite Yajnavalkya. He is confronted by an orator, Gargi Vachaknavi—a *brahmacharini* (maiden)—*Brahmavadini* (a name in itself significant). 'Like two shining arrows in the hand of a skilled archer are', she exclaims, 'my questions'. (*Vide Brihad. Up.* III. viii).

As the Swami remarked : The questioner's (*Brahmavadini's*) '...sex is not even commented upon. Again, could anything be more complete than the equality of boys and girls in our old forest universities ? Read our Sanskrit dramas—read the story of Shakuntala and see if Tennyson's "Princess" has anything to teach us'.<sup>15</sup>

Drawing upon his observations and experiences in the occident, the Teacher added :

...There is many a burden bound with legal tightness on the shoulders of Western women that is utterly unknown to ours. We have our wrongs—but so have they. We must never forget that all over the globe the general effort is to express love and tenderness and uprightness, and that national customs are only the nearest vehicles of this expression. With regard to the

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata*, Vol. III, No. 4, p. 66.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* p. 67.

<sup>11</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata*, Vol. III, No. 4, p. 66.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

domestic virtues I have no hesitation in saying that our Indian methods have in many ways the advantage over all others.<sup>16</sup>

The Swami always insisted, in fact, that, morally, Indians were the most exalted among humans. To solve the problems that perplexed us, he would 'draw out' our women's faculties—not compel them to carry another load—the burden of words. By so doing he wished to give India once more '...great fearless women—women worthy to continue the traditions of Sangamita, Lila, Ahalya Bai, and Mira Bai. Women fit to be the mothers of heroes, because they are pure and selfless and strong, with the strength that comes of touching the feet of God.'<sup>17</sup>

He exhorted the women—as he did the men—to '...Believe in India and in our Indian faith. Be strong and hopeful and unashamed, and remember that with something to take, Hindus have immeasurably more to give than any other people in the world.'<sup>18</sup>

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The idealist could be intensely practical. Women, he knew, had to be protected from men—girls, even infants, from men with the beast roused in them. To persons who, in the name of religion, expected Vivekananda to range himself against the Act fixing 12 (only 12) as the 'age of consent', he remarked :

...The rulers passed the Age of Consent Bill prohibiting a man, under the threat of penalty, to live with a girl under twelve years, and at once all the so-called leaders of your religion raised a tremendous hue and cry against it, sounding the alarm, 'Alas, our religion is lost! As if religion consists in making a girl a mother at the age of twelve or thirteen! Our boys should no longer be burdened with the cares and anxieties of the family life before their body attains its full growth, and their mind is developed enough to take up the duties and responsibilities that are so often thoughtlessly thrust upon them at quite an early age.<sup>19</sup>

Some years earlier he had rebuked a crowd in Madras in these words :

...I am asked again and again what I think of the widow problem, and what I think of the woman question.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* p. 67.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 67-68.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* p. 69.

<sup>19</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata*, July 1932, Vol. XXVII, No. 312, p. 251.

Let me answer once and for all. Am I a widow that you ask me that nonsense? Am I a woman that you ask me the question again and again? Who are you to solve woman's problems? Are you the Lord God that you should rule every widow and every woman? Hands off! They will solve their own problems.<sup>20</sup>

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India did not yet have, Vivekananda frankly admitted, 'great women'. We, therefore, 'must borrow them from other nations'.

These words he penned at Almora on the 29th July 1897. They were addressed to an Irish woman—Miss Margaret Noble. At the time of his first visit to London she had been engaged in teaching. With intuitive sympathy that even then distinguished her, she had taken to the idea of bringing up children in a healthy, artistic atmosphere—in a 'child's garden' (kindergarten), as it was called. Children entrusted to her loving care took to her quickly. She could do anything with them.

While thus engaged, Margaret Noble went to hear the Swami speak in a Mayfair drawing-room. She found that he, too, was conducting a kindergarten—only his garden was for children who regarded themselves as grown-ups.

Within her Celtic breast—highly emotional for all the calm that often sat upon her brow—an impulse soon rose. Why should she not shift her being to that kindergarten? Dwelling in an exhilarating spiritual environment, why should she not help Indians with such experience as she had been enabled, by favourable circumstances, to acquire?

She was precisely the type the Swami wished to 'borrow'. She was 'a real lioness to work for Indians, women especially'. Her 'education, sincerity, purity, immense love, determination, and, above all, the Celtic blood' made her 'just the woman' helper India needed.

He would not have her come out to our motherland, however, under false pretences. So he told her of the difficulties. They were many. To give her an idea, he wrote :

...You cannot form any idea of the misery, the superstition, and the slavery that are here. You will

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* p. 252.

be in the midst of a mass of half-naked men and women with quaint ideas of caste and isolation, shunning the white skin through fear or hatred and hated by them (? the whites) intensely. On the other hand, you will be looked upon by the white as a crank and every one of your movements will be watched with suspicion.

Then the climate is fearfully hot: our winter in most places being like your summer, and in the south it is always blazing.

Not one European comfort is to be had in places out of the cities.<sup>21</sup>

If, however, she would brave all this, he would 'stand' by her 'unto death whether after essaying the task she became disgusted and fell away, whether she worked 'for India or not, whether' she 'gave up Vedanta or remained true to it'.

Margaret Noble came out to India. She stayed here. She entered the Ramakrishna Order. In token of her dedicating her all to India, the Swami called her Nivedita—the Dedicated One.

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Sister Nivedita's coming was to the *Prabuddha Bharata* a gain of inestimable value. In its pages appeared reports of the important lectures she delivered, also her impressions of the Master's work in London, descriptions of her pilgrimages to such sacred places as Amarnath, Kedarnath, and Badri Narayan; notes about Vivekananda's tours; and studies of India and Indians.

These were the delight of my young life. Her quick, nervous, deft dabs, vivid in colouration, against a background solid with the shining guinea-gold of a warm-hearted convert's devotion to our culture, captivated me. In my college days and even after, I would quickly leaf through a new issue of the *Prabuddha Bharata*. When I arrived at something from her pen in it, I would halt in that operation and avidly devour the pages.

One of the earliest pieces I read was headed 'Chicago Notes'.<sup>22</sup> I hardly dreamt that in half a dozen years I would be wandering through the streets and stockyards of

that city, attending conventions, meeting sleuths and statesmen, and discussing 'Mormonism' with Paul Carus, a scholar of central European origin devoted to the *Advaita* philosophy. I never forgot, even in those moments of ready journalistic triumph, that this Irish disciple of Swami Vivekananda had written of liberty as she had found it in Chicago in these terms:

'Indeed this principle has long ago ceased to be a social conception only in this country. It has soaked down, now, into the national and individual consciousness, as an ethical, spiritual truth'.<sup>23</sup>

When would I be able to write of India in similar terms? I asked myself that question then. I do so now—45 years later.

Nivedita had written of Hull House, Chicago:

...this is a social settlement. Let me describe it first. Hull House must once have been the home of a wealthy merchant, comfort and beauty have both been considered in the building of the oldest part of it; today it stands in the heart of Chicago slums, and this old dwelling is now only the central feature of a mass of buildings which include a lecture hall, a gymnasium, a workshop, a concert-room, a school, and a host of other things. There is a nursery, too, where mothers going out to a day's work may leave their babies, and near by is the home for working women of which I spoke before, while last but not least is an excellent coffee house, or restaurant, where good and well-cooked food may be had at the lowest prices, most attractively served. And all the clubs and classes and manifold activities are served by some twenty men and women who make their home in the central building.<sup>24</sup>

Why could we not have such institutions in India, too? So I asked. One of the articles I contributed to an Indian review while sojourning in Chicago related to this theme.<sup>25</sup>

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Some of the notes that Nivedita penned in the pages of the *Prabuddha Bharata* pained me. From these it was clear that the giant was breaking down. The Master went on teaching and organizing: but he was ailing, much of the time, seriously ill, in fact.

There was one item, taken from the *Hindu* (Madras), with which paper I was soon to

<sup>21</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata*, May 1922, Vol. XXVII, No. 310, p. 181.

<sup>22</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata*, February 1900, Vol. V, No. 43, pp. 25-27.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* p. 26.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* March 1900, pp. 41-42.

<sup>25</sup> *The Modern Review* (Allahabad, now Calcutta), May 1910, pp. 446-457.

be intimately associated for years, that roused in me resentment. In fast failing health, Vivekananda proceeded abroad from Calcutta, where bubonic plague had recently broken out in a virulent epidemic form. As his ship—*Golconda*—touched Madras, he saw the pier

....crowded with an eager throng of spectators anxious to see Swami Vivekananda.... But to their great disappointment they were told that the vessel having arrived from Calcutta, an infected port, was under quarantine, and that the Swami would not be allowed to land. The numerous people who had gathered together, of all ranks and ages, had, therefore, to go away considerably vexed.

Some there were who were determined to have a glimpse at least of the Swami, and with that view they went in boats alongside the vessel, from whose deck the Swami was accorded a distant but cheerful welcome by his friends and admirers. Some days ago a meeting was held at Castle Kernal under the presidency of the Hon'ble Mr. P. Ananda Charlu, when it was resolved to address Government praying that Swami Vivekananda be permitted to land at Madras and stop there for a few hours before embarking again. Message after message was despatched to the Blue Heights, but the Swami's friends and admirers got some vague replies, but no sanction was wired to the Port Health Officer and the result was that the Health Officer would not allow him to land....

It is said, however, that the Captain of the vessel was permitted to come ashore, and that he was seen in various parts of the city. If this is true, I would like to know if the Captain had undergone any singular process of immunization from infecting other people. It is hoped that Government would call for a report from the Port Surgeon as to why the Captain was allowed to go about the town and under whose authority,"

while the Swami was denied the like privilege.

A little while prior to his being made the victim of such bare-faced invidiousness, Vivekananda had blessed plans for inaugurating 'Plague Service' in Calcutta. The Swami Sadananda, detailed to organize it, had the active assistance of the Swamis Shivananda, Nityananda, and Atmananda.

Vivekananda had himself addressed a body of students, urging them in words that visibly stirred them, to engage in social service. Some fifteen students actually formed themselves into a small band of helpers for door-to-door visitation of huts in selected *bustees* (settlements). They dis-

tributed sanitary literature and gave quiet words of advice and counsel.

\* \* \*

This was but one of the noble endeavours of which the *Prabuddha Bharata* brought us tidings. It told us, for instance, that a *Seva-shrama* had been started at Kankhal (now comprised within the Hardwar municipal area) in July 1901.<sup>27</sup> A little later a similar institution began its work of mercy at Benares.<sup>28</sup>

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There was news, too, of developments not directly connected with the Mission. The Central Hindu College that had opened its doors in Benares in the autumn of 1899, was hailed as a symbol as well as a vehicle of regeneration. Mrs. (later Dr.) Annie Besant, responsible for its foundation, belonged to the organization which would have been *anathema maranatha* to Vivekananda had he been small-minded. Had not its President (Colonel Olcott) cold-shouldered the Swami and even denounced him as a charlatan? *The Prabuddha Bharata*, however, declared :

....We regard the institution as epoch-making, destined to produce manifold benefits, educational, social, and religious.

....The Central Hindu College scheme should be regarded as epoch-making from three points of view. Firstly, educational. It will supply a want which is more and more being felt in the present system of education, namely the absence of any provision for imparting religious instruction....

....The Central Hindu College professes to teach to the highest standard attainable in any Indian university, nay, to reproduce some of the best features of English universities in the matter of endowments for scholarships, fellowships, etc....there can be no denying that, even if it be not a panacea for all the maladies of the present system of education, through it a means will be found to make the ethical ideas of Hinduism mould the life of the coming generation of Hindus and thus make them doubly better....The anomaly of Hindu students studying in mission colleges whose avowed and prime object, with some honourable exceptions, is the conversion of the *heathen*, must be put an end to....Any institution which professes to be anything like national is bound to become what may be called, for want of a better expression, a great social *idea*. Believing as we do that the present Revival of Hinduism is highly conducive to national progress in all its forms and that religious and social reforms rightly viewed, have identical

<sup>26</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata*, Vol. IV, No. 37. August 1899, p. 128.

<sup>27</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata*, October 1901, Vol. VI, No. 63, p. 177.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* June 1901, Vol. VI, No. 59, p. 97.

objects to work for and identical results to achieve, we sanguinely hope that the Central Hindu College scheme, if it attains to its fruition, will give new vitality to Hinduism and will be a landmark in the history of the Hindus in the latter part of the nineteenth century..."

Young Indians who had earned, through sheer merit, scholarships for study abroad, found encouraging mention in *Prabuddha Bharata*. One of these was Balak Ram, who distinguished himself at the Indian Civil Service examination of his year, then exclusively held in London. He was said to have married an alien: but the rumour proved untrue to the editor's delight.

Another Indian awarded a scholarship was C. (Now Sir) Ramalinga Reddy, from North Arcot. After a brilliant record at Cambridge, he engaged in educational work in Mysore, later entered politics, and has, for years, been running the Andhra University from Madras.

The scholarships founded by Nusserwanjee Jamsctjee Tata, the patriotic Parsee who ushered in the industrial age, were highly commended. Anent this great scheme for creating Indians capable of carrying on scientific research, the magazine had to say:

We are not aware if any project at once so opportune and so far-reaching in its beneficent effects was ever mooted in India, as that of the Post-Graduate Research University of Mr. Tata....

If India is to live and prosper and if there is to be an Indian nation which will have its place in the ranks of the great nations of the world, the food question must be solved first of all. And in these days of keen competition it can only be solved by letting the light of modern science penetrate every pore of the two giant feeders of mankind—Agriculture and Commerce.

The ancient methods of doing things can no longer hold their own against the daily multiplying cunning devices of the modern man. He that will not exercise his brain to get the most out of Nature by the least possible expenditure of energy, must go to the wall, degenerate and reach extinction. There is no escape....<sup>29</sup>

Vivekananda's was, indeed, a far-seeing eye! He had grasped the nation's fundamental needs half a century ago.

William T. Stead, who was soon to take me under his powerful editorial wing, was described as striving to have the benefit of the Rhodes Scholarships extended to India. The *Prabuddha Bharata* gave William Digby,

a true friend of India and himself a great journalist, the credit for passing this information on to Indians.

The magazine directed attention to linguistic, literary, and journalistic movements in the motherland. Here are few items:

The Olcott Press at Saugor (Central India) had begun publishing a Hindi monthly—*Prabhat*—devoted to the Hindu religion which, it was noted, might be expected to bring 'light to those for whom it has been started'.

Shrimati Hemanta Kumari Chowdhury had, it was noted, succeeded Shrimati Vanalata Devi as editor of *Antahpur*, a Bengali monthly conducted solely by ladies. Now she, fast travelling towards 80, lives near me and calls me brother.

Journals conducted in Indian languages had great value in our eyes because of the homily that had appeared in the January 1899 issue of the *Prabuddha Bharata*. It pointed to the relationship existing between vernaculars and nationality. Reviewing two books by C. Swaminatha Aiyar—*Vernacular Studies in Madras* and *The Encouragement of Vernaculars*, the reviewer wrote:

...The language of a nation represents the entire past of that nation—embodies in itself the impulses and forces, political, social, intellectual, moral, etc., which have acted upon it through the ages. It is, in a word, the product of a process of evolution, a process of conflict, a process of adaptation which leaves its mark upon the finished product of a growing, living language, with all the peculiarities of sound and diction. So that it only requires to be mentioned to be accepted on all hands, that both physiologically and psychologically it is far more natural and therefore easier for a child to learn his mother tongue, to acquire the rudiments of knowledge and develop its powers of thought and speech through that language than any other.<sup>31</sup>

How tardy are the framers and administrators of our educational policy! Even today this ideal remains largely an ideal.

Not that journals conducted by Indians in English were forgotten. There was, for instance, the *Indian Ladies Magazine*, edited by Mrs. Kamala Sathianadhan, M.A., from

.<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* September 1899, Vol. IV, No. 33, pp. 139-141.  
<sup>30</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata*, April 1899, Vol. IV, No. 33, p. 60.

<sup>31</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata*, January 1899, Vol. IV, No. 30, p. 13.

Madras. This publication came in for its meed of praise. 'Judging from the contents of the last ten months (for it is not any older)', the editor wrote, 'we have no hesitation in saying that it is one of our best monthlies. The chief contributors are ladies, Eastern and Western. Illustrations, mostly of women, short, original poems and stories, interesting news and notes, studies of ideal women, and papers on general education form its standard bill of fare. Its pages are replete with much that is thoughtful and valuable.'<sup>32</sup>

The reviewer waxed almost lyrical over the record achieved by the *Indian Review* (Madras), edited by Mr. G. A. Natesan who soon became my friend. He remarked :

...We are now extremely happy to be able to say that Mr. Natesan's paper has proved by the first year of its existence, that a first class monthly in India conducted solely by Indians, is not an impossibility. This magazine marks an epoch in the history of journalism in our country.<sup>33</sup>

Of the scholarly works commended, I must refer to the Pandit (Later Sir) Ganganath Jha's *Upanishads*, Vol. IV—*Chhandogya*. The magazine declared :

...We have...little doubt that Mr. Jha's labours in the field of translating the *Upanishads* will be productive of immense good both at home and abroad.<sup>34</sup>

There was a Bengali wizard—Professor (Later Sir) Jagadish Chandra Bose. He had scientific attainments that even his rivals in Europe were forced to respect. He had come to the conclusion that 'the underlying phenomena of life are the same in both animals and plants'. He had constructed delicate machines for registering responses. With these he had lectured at the Linnean Society and a report of his discourse had been published in *Nature*. '...with the aid of his assistants a series of interesting experiments had been carried out. These showed "electric response for certain portions of the plant organism".' From these it was clear that 'in respect of fatigue, behaviour at high and low temperature and the effects produced by

poisons and anaesthetics, the responses' were 'identical with those hitherto held to be characteristic of muscle and nerve...'<sup>35</sup>

There appeared, too, sayings and poems that whipped up zeal in one cause or another. William Penn, the Quaker founder of Pennsylvania, where my good lady's ancestors first settled upon emigrating from Suffolk (England), had, for instance, said :

I abhor two principles in religion, and pity those who use them—the first is obedience to authority without conviction, the other is persecuting those who differ from us for God's sake. Such a religion is without judgment, though not without teeth.<sup>36</sup>

Ella Wheeler Wilcox, who told me soon after my arrival in the States that she had sat at the great Vivekananda's feet, had written :

Whoever is begotten by pure love,  
And comes desired and welcome into life,  
Is of immaculate conception. He  
Whose heart is filled with tenderness and truth,  
Who loves mankind more than he loves himself,  
Who cannot find room in his heart for hate,  
May be another Christ. We all may be  
The Saviours of the world, if we believe  
In the divinity which dwells within us,  
And worship it, and nail our grosser selves,  
Our tempers,贪欲, and our unworthy aims,  
Upon the cross. Who giveth love to all,  
Pays kindness for unkindness, smiles for frowns,  
Lends new courage to each fainting heart,  
And strengthens hope, and scatters joy abroad.  
He, too, is a Redeemer, Son of God.<sup>37</sup>

One day—to me the saddest day that far in my life—the news came that the great heart from which had issued the energy, a particle of which went into the making of the *Prabuddha Bharata*, had ceased to beat. The Swami Vivekananda had departed from the field of his earthly endeavours. This happened in the Math he had built alongside the Ganges (Hooghly to Europeans and Europeanized Indians) at Belur, then just outside Calcutta. It is now a part of the city and serves as the nerve-centre of the Ramakrishna Mission, while the culture power-

<sup>32</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata*, June 1902, Vol. VII, No. 71, p. 107.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* February 1901, Vol. VI, No. 55, p. 20.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* April 1900, Vol. V No. 45, p. 62.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* June 1902, Vol. VII, No. 71, p. 109.

<sup>36</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata*, February 1900, Vol. V, No. 43, p. 17.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* January 1899, Vol. IV, No. 30, p. 3.

house remains in the Almora Himalaya—at Mayavati.

The issue for July 1902, gave a brief account of the Swami's last hours. According to it :

Our beloved Swamiji entered *Maha Samadhi* on Friday night, the 4th of July, at the Math, Belur. On that morning he meditated for more than two hours. During the day he held a class on Panini Grammar for about three hours, and remarked how much better he was feeling. In the afternoon he took a short walk. In the evening he went to his own room; a Brahmacarin was in attendance. He took his beads and did *japam* and directed the Brahmacarin to sit outside and do likewise. About 45 minutes later he called the Brahmacarin in and asked him to fan his head and then went to sleep. At about nine he gave a sudden start and then drew two long breaths. The Brahmacarin, unable to understand what the matter was, immediately called an aged Sannyasin, who, on coming, felt for his pulse but found it stopped.

At first it was taken to be a *Samadhi* and a brother

repeated the name of the Master (Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa) in his ear. Seeing no sign of return of life, however, a doctor was called in who tried to induce breath artificially, but without success. The next day Swamiji's body was cremated under a *Bel* tree standing on the brink of the Ganges, in the Math grounds.

In the issues of the magazine that followed, there were pages and pages of obituary notices. From every corner of the mother-land and from abroad poured forth tributes to India's Awakener.

As I read these at the time I wondered if the great heart had actually stopped beating. How could it do so while the beat of that great heart could be felt through the pages of the *Prabuddha Bharata* ?

I have kept on asking this question. Never have I been in doubt as to the answer.

(*To be continued*)

## ONE ASPECT OF POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION

BY SWAMI LOKESWARANANDA

So at last the war is over and the curtain is rung down on that grim drama of death and destruction that was being enacted all these years, and what a relief it is ! The world is thankful that the catastrophe has ceased and once again there is peace and it is possible for men and women to go about their business with a light heart and without the thoughts of the war weighing on their minds. But the end of war does not exactly mean rest and relaxation, for, there are so many other problems facing the world—the problem of occupied Germany and Japan, the problem of inter-Allied relations, and over all towers the problem of reconstruction. This has been the costliest war imaginable and it has caused such a dreadful drain on our resources and the task of reconstruction is going to be far more formidable than any ever tackled. But this need not cause despair, for man is now much more clever than ever before and

whatever may be the magnitude of the task on hand, with his scientific knowledge and experience of life he can accomplish it and of course this task of reconstruction he is going to accomplish by all means. Progressive countries are already at it, for there are no demands of war now and they are now able to divert most of their time and effort towards tackling post-war problems and they are busy drawing up plans and are even carrying them out where possible. Russia, they say, has already launched forth on her reconstruction program and her factories and workshops are humming day and night turning out goods according to her peace-time needs. Other countries also will follow suit as soon as their hands are free and they can get going. Some countries are very ambitious and they intend to produce not only enough things they want but more, so that they can compete in foreign markets and recover lost trade and open

new channels of expansion, if possible. In short, all countries are determined that they will reconstruct life on a sounder basis and they will increase their wealth and prosperity and will have everything more than they ever had.

So far it is very good and one wishes nothing but god-speed to all their plans and ambitions. But is it all to rebuild industries, to recover lost trade, and to increase material prosperity and comforts? Does reconstruction mean nothing but repairing the damages that the war has caused to our material life? Must it be confined to our material life only? What about the unseen but colossal damage that the war has wrought to our moral and spiritual life? Has not the war drained us of our spiritual wealth as it has of our material possessions? Are we not very much the poorer spiritually as materially because of the war? And shall we do nothing to regain our lost spiritual wealth, to rehabilitate our much mutilated spiritual life and so to reinforce it that it may be safe against any onslaughts that may be made on it again? Is it not true that these periodical outbursts of brutal passions which engage us in mutual slaughter are essentially a spiritual problem? Can we ever hope to stop this folly unless we are able to improve our inner nature, to subjugate our passions which blind us to all our moral and spiritual obligations, and are able to govern ourselves strictly in accordance with the principles of religion? In order to promote peace and understanding in the world is it not necessary that we learn, individually as well as collectively, to overcome selfishness and jealousy and greed and accept a view of life in which differences of race and colour and creed boil down to one basic unity such as religious ideals visualize?

But the question may be asked: How does war affect us spiritually at all? The damage it causes us materially is obvious but not so the alleged spiritual damage. True, but if we look closely and if we think hard a bit, it will be crystal clear and we will be aghast at the enormity of it. What happens to a man when he lets go all restraint and

surrenders himself completely to his passions? Is it not the immediate result that his power of restraint weakens and he becomes more and more prone to orgies of passions? And if he goes on always giving in to his passions, does he not eventually become lost to all moral appeals and descend to a level in which he is hardly better than a brute—all his spiritual virtues shrunk and deadened and passions running riot? To give an illustration, all normal men respect life; they do not think of committing a murder unless they are thrown off their balance and passions take complete hold of them. But once they do commit a murder, life has ceased to be sacred to them and they are ready to commit the next murder at a much less provocation and with much less compunction. And gradually they are so hardened that taking life becomes a child's play to them and they enjoy it and even find it hard to resist.

Take the case of the soldier. He kills because it is his duty and because it is sanctioned by law. But that does not mean he completely escapes the psychological change that accompanies such action. When he has his first victim of the enemy, he is profoundly shocked and for days together he is sick and the sight of blood and the dead haunts him. But when he kills next time, it is not so much upsetting and he is not much troubled in mind. And as he kills more and more, as he must it being his duty, he finds it is not only easy but even pleasant and perhaps he smiles at himself that at one time he used to dread the act so much. The change that occurs in him is obvious and of course it is most profoundly detrimental to the moral foundations of his character. It may be argued that whatever he may do as a soldier, his fundamental attitude towards his fellow men does not change and when he returns to civilian life, he will be his old self again. It is absurd to talk like this, for his experiences in the battle-field—the horrors of death and mutilation, brutalities and man's incredible callousness to them, inhuman suffering and hardship, are bound to harden him and his sense of moral values will suffer a complete transfor-

mation and he can by no means be the same man again. He will return from the war the ghost of his old self, maimed in spirit, if not in body too, and it is impossible for him to fall back into the old ruts of life again. He will have new tastes, new habits and new ideas and he will have formed a new code of life, and life itself may have changed its meaning to him. He will be a misfit in his old environments and he will find people around him do not understand him as he does not understand them and even his wife and children have moved away from him. And he will find the whole atmosphere around him most hostile and suffocating, for he cannot act as he would like to and there is too much restraint and too much insistence on manners and habits which to him are most silly and meaningless, and perhaps in his heart he will long for a return of the conditions of war.

This is most tragic, but this happens almost to everybody who goes through the dreadful experiences peculiar to present-day war, and this happens, because spiritually he is all but killed, because his higher nature which distinguishes him from the brute is deliberately suppressed, almost annihilated, and he is rendered into an instrument of death, of all forms of coldblooded brutality.

But in this war not only a few million soldiers are undergoing this kind of change but almost the whole human race. It is not only they who actually fight that have their higher nature suppressed but also those who stay back at home. For in every sense this is a total war and it involves the civilians as much as the soldiers. Every one has to take a share in it in some form or other and even women and children are not exempted. In every heart there is anger and hatred and an anxiety to kill and to destroy everything of the enemy that hands can lay on, and psychologically, therefore, the reaction is the same in the civilian as well as in the soldier. Passions are worked up to the highest pitch and the propaganda machinery of the state sees to it that they never cool off. If necessary, false stories of enemy atrocities are cooked up and facts are distorted and figures are

exaggerated. And whatever cruel measures the government may take against the enemy, as a loyal citizen you must support them, and even if they appear to you contradictory to all canons of humanity, you must pretend they are not and even law and religion may be invoked to sanction them. No matter what brutalities your country's forces perpetrate, you must acquiesce in them and pretend that they are right and justified. The whole atmosphere is so charged with all the animal passions that even the things most obviously wrong and wicked pass as good and decent and the social conscience is stifled and reason and good sense completely disappear. The soldier and the civilian alike suffer high tension and their nerves are always on an edge and they become completely incapable of restraint in anything. Old values change and old standards and codes of conduct are thrown to the winds and there is a complete break-down of all moral safe-guards. People become, with rare exceptions, selfish and irresponsible and they behave as they like—in the most insensible and irrational way. And they become reckless and frivolous and there is nothing they will not be prepared to do to suit a moment's fancy. And the worst part of it all is that this state of affairs is condoned and encouraged.

The stock argument of course is that there is a war on and it has to be kept going and it will not do therefore to let people bother too much about morals, about what is right and wrong. It is, on the contrary, necessary that they should be kept so preoccupied with the pursuit of the war and the manifold duties it entails, that they would have no time to be troubled by qualms of conscience. But it is not recognized that this lowering of standards, this abolition of values, leaves a permanent wound on society and it does not heal up all at once, for these values, these standards society has evolved through centuries of experience and once they are destroyed, they cannot be restored overnight.

Indeed the spiritual loss that man suffers through war is terrible, most alarming. It is, in fact, more alarming than any loss that man

may suffer materially. It is true that the present war has taken a staggering toll of man's material possessions and it can be estimated only in terms of billions and billions of sterlings. But however great the loss, it can be and will be made good in, say, two generations, given wise planning and a cautious and smooth direction of affairs. This, however, cannot be said of spiritual loss, for man's progress on the spiritual plane is very slow and it involves more time, more effort, more attention. And what is worse is that the fact of the spiritual loss due to war is not appreciated by those who have the direction of affairs in their hands and nothing is therefore done to repair it. That man has a spiritual side and it is by far the most important side is seldom recognized and even if recognized, problems relating to it are never properly grasped and tackled, for man's tendency is to be occupied with what is obvious and spiritual problems are never very obvious. The result is we neglect them and our spiritual progress remains arrested after each war and we are confronted with more and more problems and in spite of our desperate efforts to get away from war and violence we never get away from them.

After the horrors of World War I there was a universal anxiety shared alike by the victor as well as the vanquished that there should be no more war, and all safe-guards were taken to prevent recurrence of the mad folly that is war. But in spite of all they did there has been another war on us sooner than anybody ever expected and it has been by far the grimdest war man has ever fought. And it was there, chiefly because we lacked that spiritual vision, those higher qualities of reasoning and understanding and toleration that alone could assure cessation of war once for all and that could make it appear so stupid and absurd that clash of arms as a means of settling quarrels would be altogether ruled out from the civilized code of human conduct. After the ordeal of the last war we expressed great abhorrence of war and professed high ideals and talked of self-determination and international co-operation and it seemed as if we would never

go to war again, but when the question arose and the moment came to decide, inevitably we chose the path of war. And how could we help it? The temptation was too great and we could not possibly resist it, for resistance in the face of great provocation is possible where there is great spiritual strength—a thing to which we have always been strangers, particularly after the last war. We could perhaps have escaped war then, if we had an abundance of spiritual qualities, but the last war had denuded us of them, and it was impossible for us to act in a way other than we did. The degree to which we had been impoverished in our spiritual qualities by World War I is fully reflected in our activities during the period immediately following the war. In everything we did then and in every sphere of life, we exhibited a singular lack of common sense and discrimination, and we were up for anything that was cheap and vulgar and we cared only for the sensational. In arts and literature, in political ideology and social movements—everywhere, we showed a callous disregard for the abiding values of life, a complete and tragically stupid negation of the time-honoured traditions. A Hitler and a Mussolini and all they imply are possible only in a society such as was ours and they are symbols of the depths to which we had descended in our spiritual degradation.

It is clear, therefore, that if we are to secure peace and if we are to build up a better world—a world in which relations between class and class, between race and race, between country and country, will be happier and more friendly, we must then improve our spiritual nature, must so augment our spiritual qualities that we are never carried away by our passions and our judgement is never clouded and we are always motivated by reason and all that is best in us. It is not conceivable, at least as the world is constituted now, that clash of interests between one nation and another shall ever be completely eliminated, but this at least can be guaranteed, given of course enough good sense in the nations concerned, that such a clash shall not lead to war and violence. There can never

be any decent and fair settlement of a quarrel through brute force. Such a settlement can be reached, if at all, through appeal to the higher nature of man. In the past any two men who had a quarrel to settle between themselves would fight a duel. And often they would accept the result of the duel as the verdict of justice. Resort to war as a means of deciding on which side lies justice is a similar example of crudely perverse human logic. Victory and justice are not necessarily found at the same place. They may be as far apart as day from night. The idea of maintaining peace through armed force is at best a negative idea. It is like flogging a schoolboy or threatening him with it in order to teach him to behave. If nations are to be prevented from committing acts of violence and aggression, the best method to be adopted is to convince them of the utter stupidity of such a thing, to make them see that it is a disgraceful breach of the code of decent and civilized behaviour, a sin against God as well as man, and that judging by the long-term result it never pays. The remedy must be applied to the root of the disease, otherwise there is every risk it will recur again and again as opportunities present themselves. All our problems, individual or communal, have their origin in the forces within ourselves, and unless we direct our attention to them and set about controlling them and using them for better and higher purposes of life, no extraneous measures, however perfect and ingenious, will be sufficient to solve those problems. The mistake that has been committed again and again in our attempts to reform the world is that we have concerned ourselves far too much with external things and far too little with our own minds. A perfect world with a corrupt man is certainly not the solution; much better than that is a perfect man in a corrupt world. The best solution is of course that both man and the world should be perfect. But while it is doubtful if the world will ever be perfect, it is possible—and it is a matter of experience too—that, if not the whole race of man and all at the same time, an ever increasing

number of individuals can be made to progress rapidly towards perfection. And if this happy result can be brought about, three-fourths of our problems will then have been solved. The task before us, therefore, is to work for this result. We have spent enough money and time trying to improve the world, with results none too satisfying to us. Let us now try to improve ourselves a bit.

But how can we improve ourselves? The answer is: By education and by the practice of the basic principles of religion. The scheme certainly sounds very trite and one imagines this will provoke a smile of amused incredulity on many faces, for although many will be willing to admit some slight importance of education in this matter, they will definitely refuse to recognize that religion has anything to do with it. But whatever that may be, no scheme purporting to reform man can be considered adequate and sensible, which does not include both education and religion, which does not, on one hand, so educate man that his mind is liberated from the narrow and stupid prejudices of race and country, and, on the other, make him so deeply inspired by religious spirit that under all circumstances his reaction is nothing but that of tolerance and sympathy and goodwill. It is impossible to deny that education and religion are the most potent factors in our life and we are largely as they shape us. Given a sound and liberal education and a deeply religious outlook, man's chances of success in his struggle against greed and anger and hatred and other elemental characteristics of man are increased, and unless a majority of us have succeeded in this struggle, conflicts shall not cease in the world and there shall not be peace and happiness. At present education serves no other purpose than that it produces intellectual arrogance and racial pride and jealousy, and religion does nothing more than to make man bigoted and self-sufficient; they do not help to bring people together and to make them conscious of their common ties and common heritage. Instead, they accentuate their differences and teach them to hate and distrust one another. The sad state of affairs

to which the world has come now is largely due to wrong education and wrong religion. Nazi Germany is the creation of an education in which the dominant notes are pride and ambition and her ally Japan is the creation of a religion in which king takes the place of God and service to him is the ruling passion of the heart. If these two countries are to be kept from going to war in future, they have to be taught the right sort of religion and the right sort of education, and that of course applies to other countries as well. In fact, in every country religion and education have to be so organized that service to and sacrifice for fellow men may become the common rule of life and each man and woman in society naturally and easily accepts the higher values of life. We have to build up a society in which any act of violence, any act prompted by the sordid desire of personal aggrandizement will be abhorred and men and women will learn to love one another and feel that they are essentially one and that they are responsible for one another's happiness. It must not be thought that this is an impossible ideal. This is possible and must be achieved. It is called realism to be pessimistic about man. No mistake has cost man more dearly than this. The assumption that man is essentially wicked and is not capable of much improvement is wrong and sinful. With emphasis on right things man can be improved almost to any extent. Russia has demonstrated this. There man has been taught to think more of the community than of his self. This is a tremendous achievement. More shall be achieved if Russia continues to give her people the right sort of education—and if religion, true religion, of course, is added to it. It must be understood that religion cannot be excluded, for religion alone gives man all the higher impulses of life and it is a discipline which draws out the best in him. We have enough good ideas and enough good intentions, but they never lead us anywhere, for we do not know how to work them out and it is religion which shows us the way. Religion alone enables us to train our feelings and our

emotions, our reason and our judgement, and to so direct them that they may help us forward and not hinder us, as they do now, in our attempt to do what is right and best for us and the community. Let us by all means try and be better men and women, and that is the only way we can save the world and, incidentally, ourselves too. It is a fatal mistake to think that we can save the world by perfecting our systems and our administrative machines, for however good they may be, they cannot function as they are expected to and they are bound to break down after a while, unless we ourselves are good and are ready to work them true to their spirit. The failure of the League of Nations points to that. In spite of all good intentions and soundness of organization it did not succeed, because we ourselves were not ready to act up to the high ideals it embodied and to make the sacrifices that its success demanded. This will be the fate of any other machinery we may set up for safe-guarding international peace and justice, for although we mean well and do really want to see the end of war and violence from the earth, we are not prepared to display that amount of magnanimity and disinterestedness and that sense of fair play essential for all international differences to be composed amicably. What the proposed peace machinery is going to be at the best is that it will be a body which being dominated by the Big Powers as it must be, will so function that the smaller powers will have no effective voice in any matter and they will always be bullied and coerced and forced to do things which they would not do of themselves and which are perhaps contrary to their own interests. This will mean that there will be no real justice but only a mockery of it and that there will be peace so long as it suits the Big Powers. And as long as the Big Powers are able to pull their weight together, this arrangement will work very well, but if they fall out as they are bound to seeing how wrong their basic outlook is, the whole thing will fall to pieces as did the League of Nations, and the world will once again be plunged into a deadly

war. Democracy is a good ideal and so is also communism, but experience has shown that, however good they themselves may be, they do not succeed unless people who accept these ideals are fully aware of their implications and are ready to act up to them. And acting up to them means much more than simply being educated in the doctrines of these particular brands of political philosophy. It means, among other things, a tremendous amount of goodness of character, of integrity, of sense of responsibility, of the spirit of service and sacrifice, of forbearance and goodwill towards others, and, above all, of incorruptibility. But this goodness of character does not come all of a sudden. It has to be acquired and it can be acquired only through intensive education and through the intensive practice of religion.

It is a pity that leaders of nations do not grasp this. They are content with planning for national prosperity and international peace, but they do not realize that their plans

will remain inadequate and have no chance of succeeding unless they include in their plans steps which will improve man's moral and spiritual nature. As it is urgent that the material loss sustained by man in course of the war is repaired, so also is urgent, and perhaps more so, that the spiritual and moral loss man has suffered because of the war is made good. That there has been an enormous decline of man, morally and spiritually, is patent enough and it will be a grievous omission if nothing is done to secure man's improvement in these directions. The point has come in man's material progress when he is dangerously near the brink of self-annihilation and the only way he can save himself is to raise a spiritual bulwark, and on this task, therefore, men responsible for post-war reconstruction must concentrate themselves if they are going to avoid the catastrophe that threatens mankind as well as the world now.

## THE DANCE-DRAMA OF KERALA

By L. K. BALA RATNAM

If the cultural standing of a country is to be gauged by the glory of her arts, then Kerala surely stands on a unique pedestal. The country is very intriguing indeed, especially to students of art and anthropology. Here you find quaint customs, strange usages, singular social laws, differing from those of the rest of India. Here you meet also some of the oldest dance and dramatic arts of India—the *Kathakali*, *Thullal*, *Chakyar Koothu*, *Koodiyattam*, *Kaikottikali*, etc. which speak greatly of the aesthetic culture and the emotional faculties of our ancients.

Among the many popular and interesting entertainments, evolved by Kerala's indigenous theatre, and provided for the spectators during the *utsavams* in temples, is the *Thullal*, which belongs to the realm of story-telling.

It is more delightful and pleasing to the people than the rather slow-moving and ponderous *Koothu* of the Chakyar. The credit of its invention goes to Kunjan Nambiar, one of the greatest of Malayalam poets, who lived in the first half of the eighteenth century. Performed during day-time, unlike *Koodiyattam* and *Kathakali* which are performed at night, there is only one actor in a *Thullal* play. The actor wears a simple costume consisting of a frilled skirt, some arm and chest decorations. His face is painted and he wears a head-dress. He is assisted by a songster who plays on a musical instrument known as *maddalam* and a follower who keeps time by sounding the cymbals. The actor not only sings but also dances and makes appropriate gesticulations which are of a simple

nature. *Thullals* are composed in such easy language that even the man in the street is able to understand them.

A slight drumming announces the show and the auditorium which is generally an open ground, is rapidly filled with people. There are no tickets to buy. The audience is a jolly good gathering of men, women, and children, picturesquely clad and ready for the delights of the entertainment. They quickly react to the happenings on the stage and register their delight often with hearty laughter, remarks full of pep, or with absorbed calm. It is not unusual to find the tired, quietly stretching themselves to snatch a few hours of sleep or busy in their dream-lands. But the narration of the story goes on regardless of these interruptions.

Mention has just now been made that it was Kunjan Nambiar who gave to the world the *Thullal* form of dance recital. Nambiar is only a caste name and the time-honoured duty of this caste, according to the *Shastras*, is to play on the *mizhavu* (a kind of drum) in temples during the performance of the *Chakyar Koothu* which also belongs to the realm of story-telling. The Chakyars are keen-witted, and they narrate the *puranic* stories, repeating the Sanskrit verses and explaining them in Malayalam—of course, enlivened with frequent sallies of wit and humour, most of them at the expense of the hearers. The recitation of the *shlokas* is aided by two musicians, one who leads the song and plays on an instrument, and the other who keeps time by beating cymbals.

#### *Origin of Thullal*

There is a very interesting story told of the origin of *Thullal*. On one occasion, Kunjan Nambiar went to the court of the Raja of Ampalapuzha (the *porca* of the Portuguese and the Dutch writers) to seek his fortune there. One day Nambiar was commanded to assist a Chakyar on the drum in the local Sri Krishnaswami temple, the usual drummer being otherwise busy that day. Unfortunately Nambiar was not fully well up in the art and so missed the *tala*

(rhythm). The Chakyar was much annoyed and so, in the course of his discourse, ridiculed the drummer for his shabby performance on the drum. Nambiar in his turn was annoyed and swore that he would wreak his vengeance and humble the proud Chakyar for his audacity in insulting him publicly.

The cut of reproof seemed to whet Nambiar's imagination. He prayed to Lord Sri Krishna for help and worked hard the whole night through with a heavy heart and evolved a new form of story-telling. The next day after the stinging reproof, Kunjan Nambiar went as usual to the temple. Near the place where the Chakyar was staging his performance, there could be seen to the surprise of all a figure adorned in picturesque costume singing to the accompaniment of a drum and a pair of cymbals. Well, that was Kunjan Nambiar himself at his new *Ottan Thullal*. The sight no doubt was so thrilling and impressive that he had the whole of the audience listening to him, while the amazed and perturbed Chakyar had to face an empty hall. With Nambiar's revenge there arose the new form of entertainment which has maintained with unparalleled splendour till now its popular appeal, combining as it does simple Malayalam language, dance, song, and acting. All attracted by the novelty of the performance soon admitted that Nambiar had produced something infinitely more delightful and appealing to the people's own heart, than the greatly ponderous *Koothu*.

The *Koothu* was completely eclipsed by the new art. The conservative section among the public invoked royal intervention, and, as a result, Nambiar had to shift the scene of his activities to Thagazhi. Maharaja Marthanda Varma conquered and annexed the principality of Ampalapuzha in 1754 and Nambiar accompanied him to Trivandrum.

It is claimed that the *Thullal* 'drew its life from the *Koothu* and borrowed its plumage from *Kathakali*.' As in the *Koothu*, episodes in the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* form the subject-matter of *Thullal*. The stories afford both spiritual and aesthetic satisfaction to the people of Kerala as it does to the

inhabitants of Siam, Cambodia, Java, Bali, or Burma. Humour and satire are frequently indulged in, though not in the caustic vein of the Chakyars. At his first appearance Nambiar recited in simple Malayalam verse, unencumbered by too many Sanskriticisms, the story of *Kalyana Sowgandhikam*. It is an episode from the *Mahabharata*, wherein at Draupadi's behest, Bhima goes to Kubera's garden lake in quest of the divine flower called *Sowgandhika* and secures it after a series of thrilling adventures. The recital was freely mixed with songs and flashing lines of wit and humour. For accompaniment Nambiar had a drummer and a cymbal-player. The dance and the gestures, the simplicity of the language employed, the swift movement of the verse and song, the very frequent switch-over to avoid monotony,—all made a distinctly powerful appeal to the mass mind and gave *Thullal* a remarkably great popularity. In his costumes, facial make-up, dance, and gestures, the actor indents considerably on the technique of the famous dance-drama of Malabar, the *Kathakali*. The indebtedness must end here. Nambiar adopted what he desired from the existing forms of the dance and dramatic art, and the dance recital that came out from the crucible of his genius was really something striking and original. The flow and grace of the language, the variety of vigorous and rapid metres, the many literary embellishments, and keen sarcasm contributed to the popularity of the new art form.

### Three Types of *Thullal*

There are different varieties of *Thullal*. At present, there are three distinct forms known by the names of *Seethankan*, *Parayan*, and *Ottan*. The recital is, in the first two, in a less rapid style than in the third one named *Ottan*. The make-up of the actor is also less elaborate. On the head, wrists, and biceps, the actor wears young coco-nut fronds, and ties a lot of broad tapes of red and white colour, forming loops at the bottom over a short skirt, round his waist. Jingling anklets are worn at the ankles. When he is

dancing or doing his steps, these help to keep time in a pleasing manner. The *Seethankan* variety has greater quickness of movement than the *Parayan* one. The latter is well suited for the narration of pathetic stories.

*Ottan Thullal* is the most popular. The majority of *Thullals* are written in this form. The make-up of the actor is an elaborate affair. The face is painted green and a head-gear, resplendent with little mirrors and gilt-work, is worn. The eyelashes are smeared with collyrium which is also used to draw two lines from the corners of the eyes to the ears across the temples. A vertical mark *gopi* adorns the forehead. An ornamented breastplate hangs from the neck to the waist. Two little plaques adorn the shoulders. *Kankanams* (bangles) are worn on the wrists while tiny little bells in the legs tinkle rhythmically as the actor dances. A red skirt with a large quantity of looped tape is worn round the waist.

As noticed already, the actor is helped by a musician who leads the song and works on a *maddalam* (drum), and another who keeps time to the song with a cymbal. Before the performance is actually given, invocations are made to Ganesha, Saraswati and the gurus. Then comes the recital of the story for the day. The actor sings a few songs. The drummer repeats them and while he does so the actor acts out the meaning by use of appropriate acting, gestures, and facial expressions. It is really strenuous work and to avoid monotony the metre of the compositions is varied now and then.

It is an admitted fact that the pure *Ottan* is more vigorous than the *Seethankan*, while the *Parayan* is the best suited for the pathetic style. Kunjan Nambiar began with writing the *Seethankan* and *Ottan* styles of *Thullals* and finally took to writing those of the *Parayan* type. While the first two varieties of *Thullals* are overburdened with literary embellishments, are avowedly outstanding for their beauty of sound, sweet cadence, and uncontrolled outbursts of caustic humour, and are mainly intended for attracting audiences, the *Parayan* style of *Thullal* excels in

literary craftsmanship and artistic perfection.'

The new art has inspired many poets to write verses suitable for presentation in this form, and Malayalam literature has been enriched richly thereby.

### *An Estimate of Kunjan Nambiar's Work*

Kunjan Nambiar was a prolific writer who achieved outstanding success by attempting many forms of composition prevalent at the time, *Kilipattu*, *Manipravala Kavyam*, *Thiruvatirapattu*, *Kirthanam*, and *Vanchipattu*. Though his works, in each of these types, are commendable and perused by many, his chief fame rests on his *Thullal* works. He wrote more than 60 *Thullal* plays on epic and *puranic* themes as usual, but overlaid with much local colouring, and humorous though penetrating criticism of the manners and customs of the times in which he lived. In all of them he used the Malayalam of his day, with only such an admixture of Sanskrit words as would go easily with the vernacular. He called it *Manipravala* (pearls with rubies) meaning that the language should be a garland strung of Malayalam pearls with an occasional Sanskrit ruby—Malayalam terms and idioms with occasional Sanskrit expressions. And by perfecting the *Thullal* form of dance recital, he not only created a new type of histrionic art, but liberated the Malayalam language from the shackles of Sanskrit and enabled it to find its own soul. At the same time, he enriched Malayalam by introducing new metres.

Among his miscellaneous works, *Pathinalu Vratham*, *Silavathi*, *Pathu Vratham*, *Irupathinalu Vratham* (*Bhagavatam*), *Sri Krishna Charitham*, *Nala Charitham Kilipattu*, and *Panchathanthram Kilipattu* are the prominent ones. He has written some *attakathas* as well.

Nambiar's poetic genius was uncommon and vast. He was like a great fountain from which issued forth copious streams of poetry

which pleased his contemporaries and enriched his mother tongue. Though he wrote for the delectation of his audience, 'he has woven into the fabric of his poems, very clearly, some excellent didacticism, splendid spiteful stuff, satirically humorous, which applies the lash to the evils of contemporary society, effectively, without leaving, however, any lacerating wound behind.' In fact, he used poetry as a social reformation. In telling *puranic* stories, he made use of scenes and situations to put into the mouths of his characters home truths about events and personalities of his own day. There is not a single prominent community in Kerala which has not had its share of flagellation of his irony and satire. 'The falling away of the brahmins from their great ideals, the idleness and intemperate habits of the Nairs, the suicidal warfare among the chieftains, the incompetence of the soldiery, the advent of the European nations and their interference in the country's affairs, the intrigues of the courtiers and their vile flattery—all these are castigated effectively.'

And this was not all. Marvellous indeed was Nambiar's descriptive skill. An observer of men and manners, a keen lover of nature, he was able to stir in the minds of his hearers the feeling of reverential faith and love towards God in a remarkable manner.

Beyond doubt, Nambiar was in his age the greatest literary figure in Kerala. He did not of course reach the same height as Ezuthachan in the sublimity of his thought, the grandeur of his expression or the entralling spiritual fervour which transports the reader and the listener into high elevations of religious awe and devotion. But in his own time, in giving instruction by pleasing, he stands supreme. His rich imagination and penetrating insight, direct and forceful expression, violent outbursts of sparkling humour and subtle nuances, great understanding of human mind and society, and deep love of sights and sounds of nature—all mark him out distinctly as the foremost literary genius of his age.

## LIMITATIONS OF INTELLECT

BY PROF. D. N. SHARMA

To think is to judge. A judgement is a relation or correlation of facts: it is the affirmation or denial of something about something. The human intellect can hardly aspire to greater heights. It is at best a flash-light that illuminates facts and things before it endeavours to establish their relations. It is completely devoid of any capacity to sense or infer relations that do not actually meet the eye, much less to create new ones: to it things are given once for all, not to be changed or altered in any material respect. Its objects are essentially and irrevocably fixed. Intellect, however, presumes to be the measure of all things. In a way, and to a limited extent, its claim is justified. By its nature it is armed with an unfailing and unerring power to find out the relations, and subsequently the usefulness, of objects in our work-a-day life. It has a rare grasp of things and phenomena that surround us and can, with confidence, point out to us the best way in which we can employ them so as to produce results conducive to our material well-being. It has the highest practical value.

The intellect works by inches and leaves no gaps since it can fill none. It works studiously and industriously, bit by bit, and step by step. It builds, constructs and accumulates: it gathers, hoards, and garners. It proceeds on a sure basis and seldom, if ever, takes risks by treading an uncertain path. It seeks to pierce no mists, it strives to penetrate no mysteries. It walks abroad cautiously and warily within a well prescribed and clearly defined horizon: it is circumscribed. It takes no leaps: it makes no jumps. No doubt it progresses and extends its field of discovery, but its highest activity is like the steady and gradual revealing to view vista after vista by extremely slow degrees. It moves at a snail's pace.

All thought is motivated: we think of

necessity. Life, stripped of its complexities and obscurities, presents no problems or difficulties. Their elimination makes life an easy affair and takes away the necessity of thinking or reflection. All thought is in the service of action. Action, however, is not merely reaction, usually of a reflex nature, to the external stimuli: it is much more than this. It implies, in addition, the element of choice or a voluntary decision. This creates the necessity of intellect. Life is a continuous and ceaseless process of making choices and this implies or pre-supposes the existence of some standard or test by which to judge. This test usually, consciously or unconsciously, takes the form of a question: "Shall it work in life?" This is the motive that springs eternal in the human breast and gives birth and shape to all human activity. The answer to this question is provided by the intellect. It compares and contrasts, it analyses and synthesizes, and finally it formulates and decides. 'Fiat', or intellectual assent is the most essential and invariable antecedent of all voluntary actions.

The intellect works on a given data supplied by the immediate needs of life. 'The world is too much with us,' and all our activity is inevitably determined by its calls. It dries up and deadens all springs of creativity. 'We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon' in the uncertain hope of obtaining doubtful joys and comforts that this mundane existence can afford. The intellect ever hunts after the evanescent and the shortlived, based, as it is, on facts which are merely a passing feature of an abiding reality that underlies them. Unmotivated thinking is a myth and motivated thinking is an 'irritable reacting after fact'. Keats condemns this attitude of the intellect since it strikes at the root of poetry. 'Newton,' he remarks, 'has destroyed all the poetry of the rainbow by reducing

it to the prismatic colours.' He deplores this tendency of intellect as a result of which the 'rainbow is deprived of its mystery.'

The intellect works through two channels : induction and deduction. It knows no method other than generalization or the application of general laws to particular facts. Oscar Wilde says that 'to generalize is to be an idiot', and application is only a form of relation. No new knowledge can be gained by the employment of either of the two processes. Intellect is hedged round securely by these and is at home only in handling the old material, of course in a variety of new and divers ways determined by the 'coming into ken' of a new element or the appearance of a new exigency. Intellect would stagnate if no new situations arose to disturb the calm placidity of life. It would become stalemate if the necessity of making new adjustments were not the rule but the exception of life. Intellect is surrounded with the halo of inventiveness and glow of freshness simply because of its reactions towards the constantly recurring commotions or upheavals in the sea of life, ever creating new situations and raising new problems. The constructive and assimilative capacity of intellect to apprehend a new situation and to meet it on its own ground, equipped with resources carefully husbanded in the past, is simply astounding though obviously natural.

The intellect may construct, build, and formulate but it is just beyond its powers to create. It plays on and round the surface of things. 'It gives,' says Coleridge, 'a knowledge of superficies, without substance.' The glories of life that lie hidden below the surface are a forbidden realm to its devotees. In a moment of righteous indignation Keats admonishes them for this 'limited gaze' in a language at once instinct with religious fervour and sincere emotion :

Ah, dismal soul'd !

The winds of heaven blew, the ocean roll'd  
Its gathering waves—ye felt it not. The blue  
Bared its eternal bosom, and the dew  
Of summer nights collected still to make  
The morning precious : Beauty was awake !

Why were ye not awake ? But ye were dead  
To things ye knew not of,—

True, the intellect reigns supreme, with its sovereignty unchallenged, in the domain of facts. It has an undisputed sway in this kingdom which is its close preserve. Here at least it is the monarch of all it surveys. But it would be too presumptuous, if not hazardous, to assume that all is right with this world : it would rather be safe to assert that the Kingdom of Denmark is disjointed. There are internal disruptions and factions that endanger its safety. Nor is it invulnerable from without. It is open to seriously damaging attacks and has many loopholes in its apparently strong and impregnable bulwark. Facts are known and understood, even related and adjusted among themselves, but what about the broader principles of adjustment and relation. Mere proximity of time or space and similarity hardly suffice to account for the entire framework : the task presents unsurmountable difficulties. The brambles and bushes of life make the path still more risky and dangerous. Irreconcilable conflicts and contradictions arise and unbridgeable gulf and abysses yawn before the intellect. Even a great poet is perplexed and speaks with different voices when face to face with destiny. Sometimes

As flies to wanton boys are we to Gods ;  
They kill us for their sport ;

On another occasion,

The Gods are just, and of our pleasant vices  
Make instruments to plague us.

One sits dazed and stupefied before these blood-curdling oppositions and the intellect receives a rude shock : its self-confidence and self-complacency are completely shaken. It is violently aroused from its deep slumber of self-sufficiency and its professed all-round competency. It stands baffled and stunned before the dark and evil forces and inscrutable ways of life which gather force and momentum and overpower it with their vehemence and magnitude. The sense of 'the burthen of mystery' dawns on it with a unique shock. Intellect finds itself in dark narrow passages and can discover no way to extricate itself

from the intricacies of the labyrinthine maze created by itself. Life at once becomes a mystery and the intellect stands self-startled before its own limitations.

The intellect feeds upon and is nourished by the material supplied to it by the sense-impressions. Here it moves about freely, untrammelled by any impediments or hindrances. But there is a world beyond, an inadequate knowledge or complete ignorance of which makes a right understanding of even this world, especially its complexities and intricacies, impossible. It is a lovely and beautiful world but one needs to see more clearly and feel far more intensely than usual before it reveals its joys and delights to any one. It cannot be grasped by the intellect: it is beyond its reach.

'Intelligence,' says Mac Dougal, 'operates only and always in the service of the instinctive impulses to action'. Contemporary psychology has demonstrated beyond any shadow of doubt that reason and rationality are but feeble and fragile tools of probing into the depths of reality. The intellect has given a poor and self-damaging account of itself in the very fields where she was expected to achieve striking results. As the eye reveals to us only the 'Vibgyor' range, intellect is operative within a very limited range of experience yielding knowledge of a very restricted validity. We have to transcend intellect if we need to get at the higher reaches of existence: the intellect can lead but to the outermost gateway of real knowledge.

### *Imagination*

Imagination is that faculty of the mind which apprehends things in their larger relations. It is mind freed from the dead-weight of the 'lethargy of custom'. It is heightened awareness, an awareness that is more comprehensive and amplified than intellectual apprehension which is confined to the humbler task of perceiving the immediate, intimate, and necessary links that exists between facts and phenomena. Under the stress of a centralized will, the mind, like a colossus, rides astride the whole universe and

views things from imperceptible heights and dizzy summits which are beyond the reach of ordinary mortals. The petty, and therefore negligible, details that blur and enfeeble the vision and thus restrain the free activities of the mind vanish: only those things that really matter in life and are of permanent value appear large and vast in their broad outlines. Contradictions are still there but they are seen in their true perspective, so that far from hindering and dwindling life they add to and enhance its richness and wealth. They are reconciled in a richer and higher harmony. Facts and phenomena are invested with a glow and freshness of novelty engendered by a broadened, enlightened and extended mental vision. 'It is a multiform power which acting with its permeative, modifying, unifying might on the thoughts and images specifies the poet.'

Facts begin to be related not to facts but to governing laws and principles, to forces spiritual and divine, so that they begin to be located in a vaster and more comprehensive scheme of values and assume a dignity and significance to which we are ordinarily indifferent, if not actually averse or blind. The mind is at once furnished with the magical power of endowing even commonplace things with a beauty and truth unthought of before. The entire face of the universe is transformed and reveals glories and charms which a close proximity is bound to screen from view. Life is no more a mere aggregate or accumulation of things and facts, it is viewed as a never-ceasing flow or flux in which the seeming contradictions, which from a nearer point of view are so perplexing and bewildering, rise and fall like eddies for a moment simply to be re-absorbed the next instant in the all-engulfing native current. They are its temporary phases: they are evanescent and transient and their momentary appearance is a sign of life rather than an emblem of decay and dissipation. Imagination is thus the getting, by a forceful, vigorous and energetic will, out of the wheel of life to see it entire and whole, not as a part of it but as an observer and spectator. This

out-going tendency of the whole of the mind to have a clearer, brighter, and more vivid vision of the world is imagination. It is an intense passion for the universal vibrations of life and search for moral strength and intellectual power and 'joy in widest commonalty spread'. Under the spell of this burning passion the poet's eyes begin to roll in a fire-frenzy, his cheeks glow, his mouth quivers, his whole body begins to tremble. His eyes begin to wander from heaven to earth and earth to heaven, and he sees a light and receives a life which 'gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name'.

Life's forces are scattered and dissipated in consequence of the numerous channels into which it flows. It is vivisected as a result of the varying demands of the multitudinous forms which the practical life assumes. Thus distributed and confined into watertight compartments it loses its primitive mobility and original vigour and intensity. No fragmentary study of these scattered forces can be pieced together and woven into a complete whole. It can be possible only if the life-force, with one supreme effort, rallies all its forces by completely withdrawing itself from its distributaries and concentrates itself on its potentialities and immensities. Only then can an adequate estimate be made of its real nature and scope, its powers and possibilities, being enfranchised from all those encumbering elements that make cross-sections on the one continuous whole and present it piecemeal to the human view. By virtue of this freedom it is at once lifted to a higher plane by its added vigour and intensity and is naturally characterized by a heightened consciousness of its capacities. Life-force, thus released, becomes ungovernable, immeasurable, and uncontrollable. The ordinary vision finds itself too impotent to understand or comprehend its significance. The only faculty of the mind that can undertake this mighty and supreme task is imagination. It is a light that springs from within and sheds its lustre on all and transforms everything.

Imagination is adventurous and forward-looking. Unlike intellect it does not move

in a circumscribed and circumscribing circle of facts. It spurns the housewife's dreary and monotonous task of industriously arranging and organizing things in a regular order in conformity with the laws of juxtaposition, proximity, and similarity. It shakes off all restraints and 'freely flies' and 'does strange deeds on the clouds'. It is the beginning of poetry to abolish laws and methods of the rationally proceeding reason, and to plunge us once more into the ravishing confusion of fantasy, the original chaos of human nature. By repudiating and brushing aside the life-diminishing and soul-dwindling laws that curtail liberty it does not show disregard of or disrespect for all law. It has simply abolished the 'musty laws' to replace them by new ones necessitated by its regained liberty and extended range. The angle of vision is wholly changed, the outlook is enlarged. It has formulated its own values, its own standards, and its own measures which have a universal validity and application and do not 'fly at the mere touch of cold philosophy'. It switches on to newer paths, sails on 'uncharted seas' and scales loftier heights, so that one gifted with this power could say with a mingled feeling of surprise and satisfaction, 'behold, it is a new creation, all is become anew'. The world has become new or is seen in a new way. The world may continue to be the same, yet it is not the same. Under the spell of its magic wand it has put on an ethereal dress. It is that light from within which spreads its light all around, illuminates everything and enhances the worth of even the most insignificant and trite objects.

And from the soul itself must be sent  
A sweet and powerful voice, of its own  
birth

Of all sweet sounds the life and element.

Rhythm and harmony are deeply rooted in the soul: they dominate it, fill it with beauty and transform life into a thing of beauty. In consequence, man partakes of the beautiful, relishes it, realizes it and is finally saturated with it so that he moulds his life in conformity with its laws and demands. These inner harmonies and

symphonies are apprehended and brought into activity by the Imagination. It transcends intellect and dives deep into the innermost and, subtler chords of life. It covers vaster areas and its sweeping reach extends beyond the present: it is here, there, and everywhere. It spreads its vast wings over the entire field and soars freely into the vast expanse of heaven. It has a free access everywhere, yet it has its own limits. It has an external reference. It penetrates deep into the nature of reality and fathoms unmeasurable depths, yet it is not completely identified with life. This supreme task—the final efforts to know and to become life itself instead of playing round it—is the province of intuition. It is the soul cutting into the soul. By an apparent torture it gains wisdom which would otherwise be denied to humanity as it falls outside the domain of human intellect.

### *Intuition*

Intuition is the complete merging of one's individuality or re-absorption into and complete identification with the transcendental reality or 'the essence of being—reality *par-excellence*'. It is the attainment of the joy of harmony, the joy that 'never was given save to the pure, and in their purest hour'. It is only when even the creative activity of the imagination is laid at rest and the 'body almost suspended' that the primal energy, when we 'become a living soul', enjoys a transcendental poise and tranquillity. This however is to be distinguished from placidity or vacuity since it has a metaphysical content, the revelation of the Infinite. Besides it has a psychological content, the irrepressible craving for crossing the boundaries of limitations and projecting itself forward beyond the present and the now in order to melt away into eternity and reach beyond the doors till space itself melts away into Infinity: the microcosm enlarges its dimensions and itself becomes the macrocosm. It is the uncorrupted original native force of the soul which surpasses itself to realize itself. The intuitive experience is

also poetic since poetry has for its material what is most intense and profound in human experience and also because poetry is the communication of the incommunicable, it is ultimately the only medium for the expression of what is otherwise ineffable.

When the consciousness of 'I am' attains a certain fulness, reaches a certain intensity, it brings our individual personality into touch with the supreme reality, whereupon from the Infinity comes, in turn, the response, 'I am'. At this level our being rises above all distinctions of pleasure and pain into the ineffable bliss of supreme realization. As in his work-a-day world man is occupied with endeavour to fulfil his needs, to add to his possessions, to increase his knowledge, so in his literature and art he is persistently striving to enlarge and enrich the content of his consciousness in order to raise his soul to higher and higher levels, to become more and more his true Self.

Imagination and intuition differ from intellect only by virtue of their scope, intensity, and range. Yet the difference is so profound that even great intellects have been deluded into the belief that they are contradictory and hostile faculties of the mind. In fact they do not exist in mysterious detachment from one another. The intellect, whose proper domain is but the cataloguing, marshalling, and classification of facts, when emancipated from its blindness engendered by its own self-complacency and cocksureness as regards its conclusions, as also from its arid abstractions, and purified and inflamed by uncorrupted feeling and supplemented by an onrush of spiritual emotion and quickened sensibility, becomes imagination. Imagination removes all sensuous dimness and obscurity and by the vividness of its visions and impressions becomes a 'manifestation of spiritual principle' that 'gives outward expression to the harmony of personal and divine will'. A passion for a broader and a deeper vision is the genesis of imagination, freedom is its 'breath and spirit' and symbolism is its root and fruit. It underlies the 'impassioned meditations' of a Wordsworth, gives birth to

the 'fine excess' of a Keats, and provides wings to the eagle-like flights of a Shelley. Free imagination 'within no banks to stagnate and to be imprisoned' becomes the 'integral spirit of the regenerated man'. Intellect turned completely inward, when life is completely stripped of all out-going agencies, gains spiritual rights and becomes the organ of spiritual insight and grasps the highest truth. It is man's glorious prerogative and is conducive to his highest good. It is a dip into that 'permanent serenity underlying the changing affections of a soul which has either

resolved, or has never known the strife of opposing elements'. It is the sublime achievement attained by the pure heart, a fruit tasted only by the pure.

O pure in heart, thou need'st not ask of me  
What this strong music in the soul may be  
What and Wherin it doth exist.  
This light, this glory, this fair luminous  
mist,  
This beautiful and beauty-making power?  
Joy, blameless poet! Joy, that ne'er was  
given  
Save to the pure, and in their purest hour.

## THE POWER OF MEDITATION

BY A. DOROTHY BARRS

Many Western people find difficulty in the early stages of meditation, so they fail to lay the foundation for living the spiritual life.

Meditation is the control and use of thought and is divided into three parts: concentration, meditation, and contemplation. In the East one who attains perfect control is called a yogi and the method of attainment is known as yoga. Before starting on a course of mind control there are several questions the novice should ask himself. First, what is the constitution of man? Secondly, why is it necessary to attain control? Thirdly, how can control be safely achieved by one of Western origin?

Through study and experience one learns that man is threefold, and uses three component parts in his evolutionary progress—spirit, soul, and body, as St. Paul says. Spirit is the divine spark within, and is part of the One Life. This divine spark manifests through the soul which is the evolving life in man; to some it is known as the individuality; others name it the higher mind which deals with all abstract qualities. The individuality is in itself threefold, but the higher mind is the only aspect which struggl-

ing humanity can use at this stage of its development. This, in turn, manifests in each life through the personality which is composed of the lower mind or concrete thought, the desires, and action; this is the only part of himself of which the average man is consciously aware.

By further study we find that in the process of man's planetary evolution he is destined to function in other worlds or states of matter. This is a deep study and cannot be enlarged upon in a short article, but even a conception of this scheme of the evolution of life and form enlarges one's vision and understanding of the purpose of life. One begins to realize that this universe is a cosmos, not a chaos, that the life of man is a microcosm in itself. Then one sees the importance of the injunction of all the great teachers of humanity—"Man, know thyself—and thou wilt know God and the Universe".

In the early stages one must beware of confusion of thought because the various schools of thought use different terminology. The student, after much study, will find that behind this terminology there is the same underlying truth expressed in different words

and sometimes shown in different aspects.

Why is it necessary to attain control ? Until man has complete mastery over his personality he cannot hope to use it but will be used by it. Man is the slave of his desires, and uncontrolled thought drives those desires into action. These three aspects of man's conscious life must, therefore, be brought under control and man's higher consciousness must be awakened to take command.

To achieve this is the purpose of existence, and each life that is lived brings to the soul an additional strength through the lessons learned and the experience gained. No soul can travel this vast evolutionary pathway and learn all the lessons involved in one short life. Like the prodigal son who, in a far country, at last arises and returns to his Father's house, so the soul, at a given stage of its evolution, awakes and seeks to control the personality and to gain its co-operation in returning to its Father—the divine spark within.

So the questing mind of humanity at first stumbles in darkness and searches for a method which will enable it to live in conscious unity with the soul. The mind is the link between the soul and the personality ; so the mind must be controlled, for only with the steady hand of the charioteer (the soul) on the reins of his steeds (the mind) will he drive the chariot (the personality) in the direction he wishes to take, thus steering a clear course through the rocks and obstacles encountered.

We come to our third question—Can control be safely achieved ? The answer is : Only by the strong and pure of heart. There are many methods of yoga practised in the West and most of them are dangerous and unsuitable for the Western mind. Those who are sincere in their search will find many books and teachers to help them on their way, but discrimination is the first quality to build into one's life. Concentration is

the holding of the mind on a particular object or idea and to hold at bay all thoughts not appertaining to the object of concentration. This is difficult to achieve and will call out all the patience and perseverance of the student. Meditation is to brood or soliloquize upon a subject, a verse, an idea, or a problem in order to seek its larger meaning, until that which one meditates upon becomes part of one's consciousness. One then begins to find the essence of things. Contemplation is a rapt absorption into that which is meditated upon, usually an idea of God, or of the spirit within. Truly has it been said by the world teachers, 'The Path is sharp as a razor edge', and 'Straight is the way and narrow is the gate and few there be that find it'.

The practice of meditation leads to a life of absorbing interest : even in its early stages, with all its set-backs and disappointments, there are many compensations. Once the light of the spiritual life has been glimpsed there is no going back to the narrow confines of the purely material and worldly pleasures and ambitions. Once the soul has awakened to the Light there is always that inner urge to know at-one-ment with the God within. According to one's temperament and type does one find concentration, meditation, or contemplation the easiest way of approach to the goal. In reality they are but three processes of the same method—the most ancient practice that the world knows, and has been used by all the sages of the past in one form or another. Meditation is the safe and certain method which will enable man to unfold the divine potentialities within himself, to find the way, the truth, and the life, and to know the Kingdom of Happiness which all humanity today is seeking—many by devious and tortuous ways. Meditation gives power to understand the eternal verities of life, to control all that limits the soul's progress, to transmute the dross of the personality into the pure gold of the spirit within.

## ON THE DRAFT HINDU CODE.

BY RASHBEHARI MOOKERJEE, M.A., B.L.

The statement of the four judges of the Calcutta High Court<sup>1</sup> is a weighty, authoritative and most timely reminder that the passion for comprehensive codification may be carried much too far, and that so-called 'piecemeal legislation', which is somewhat of a fashionable taboo, is about the most appropriate form of remedial treatment suited to the genius of a system of law of such ancient lineage, historical continuity, and synthetic complexity of structure as the personal law of the Hindus. To define and enforce the Hindu married woman's property and other rights in respect of the husband's and the family estate to all legitimate extent; to make suitable provision for maintenance of indigent daughters and spinsters out of the paternal estate; to give statutory validity and precision to the liability of the paternal estate for the marriage expenses of a maiden daughter as a priority charge thereon; to revise the sequence of succession by a readjustment of terms between the two governing principles of spiritual benefit and propinquity of relationship in a manner more consistent with modern ideas; to soften and liberalize certain limited features of the institution of marriage—these and such like topics are reasonably indicated as the most fruitful field wherein reformist legislation may confine its ameliorative activities for the present. But on the crucial question of the daughter's co-heirship with the son in respect of the paternal estate, the learned judges return a decided negative. It may be just worth while to go into this question a little more closely here.

The claim of the daughter's co-heirship with the son as now urged, carries an undoubted appeal to natural affection and sentiment, and the reaction of the average Hindu, man or woman, is not conditioned by any

insensibility on their part to this aspect of the case. The Hindu has a soft place in his heart for his daughter. He considers it his sacred duty to dispose of his daughter in marriage to her best possible advantage, and will strain his resources to the utmost to do it. Often and often he has been known to impoverish himself and cripple the future of his family in his attempt to provide a dowry for his daughter far beyond his means. The maternal uncle's house ('Mamar Bari') is proverbially known as the second home for the sister's children, and very often proves so in fact. The Durga Puja, the high tide of the spirit of Hindu Bengal, is replete with the beautiful symbolism of the tender relationship that continues to subsist between the married daughter and her parents, and the mingled pathos and joy of the all too brief re-unions between them at long intervals under the old roof, the full emotional content of all which would be scarcely intelligible to a foreigner. If in these circumstances, the (as we believe) great majority of Hindus, men and women, prefer to stand by present law, the reason must lie deeper. The reason is that certain fundamental concepts or principles have been at work in the evolution of the Hindu social polity from the earliest times; and these concepts and the discipline thereby enjoined are more or less faithfully reflected in the Hindu law of inheritance. The householder state, that is the married state, has been prescribed as the highest norm of self-fulfilment for the great majority of men and women, the standard of right living, the fount of all social virtues, and, with the woman, at least, the central theme and the one absorbing interest of her life. To the woman, as the guardian spirit of the home, heavy responsibilities have been assigned, but with rich compensations in return, and she is sought to be sedulously trained by precept, example, and practice for

<sup>1</sup> See *Prabuddha Bharata*, August 1945, P. 235.

her special role from her earliest childhood. Marriage is the sacrament of sacraments, and with her marriage she renounces the *gotra* of her father, and espouses that of her husband, not as a mere social convention, but as the commencement of an assimilative process almost unique in its depth and vitality, and thenceforward her life is a progressive discipline, strenuous and sweet, for achieving complete self-identification with her husband and her husband's family. Her affections and interests undergo a decisive polarization, so to say, between her father's home as the sphere of the most disinterested affections and goodwill, and her husband's home as the sphere of her life's highest good and both poles gain in characteristic richness and flavour by the necessary difference of potential. The connubial union thus achieved is, in favourable cases, perhaps the most perfect of its kind, and even judged by the average result, must be pronounced to be at least as much a success as any other system of matrimony. The joint family on the patriarchal model, more or less, follows as a necessary complement of this concept of marriage, and functions, or is meant to function, as a living cell of co-operative discipline and industry, the hive of collective service and good-will. To be sure, these concepts of marriage and family life are no longer in their maximum state of efficacy, and have inevitably suffered from the battering effects of time, but they are still living principles of social conduct and well-being, and between them account for many of the traditional virtues and graces of the Hindu character, notably of Hindu womanhood, and some of the fundamental charities of Hindu social life, and there is no reason, therefore, why we should be in a hurry to scrap them. It must be frankly conceded that other views of marriage and family life are now pressing for recognition, but their demands are or may be fully met by the Civil Laws of Marriage and Succession as are already in the field, or as they may be suitably amended for the purpose. These two systems of law, I mean the traditional personal law of the community, and the civil

laws enacted to accommodate its non-conformist elements, may be allowed to flow in parallel channels, if possible with such friendly and fertilizing contacts as their juxtaposition would naturally tend to induce, but in any case undisturbedly and peacefully, and certainly without helping the one to disrupt and overflow the other. In the present social context, therefore, and with the traditional background, it would be the height of un-wisdom to pit the brother and sister as rival claimants in the paternal inheritance, for that would precipitate a violent and quite un-called-for conflict in our family life and in our social economy and ideology, the total effect of which will be, it is justly feared, of a highly destructive or disintegrating character. It is curious to note how self-forgetful we have grown within quite recent days. Not so long ago, it used to be the joke in legal circles that the death of a Mohammedan lets in even the household poultry for a share in the inheritance. But now over-fragmentation of property appears to have lost all terror for us, and we are eager to emulate the Mahomedan rule of law, while our Mahomedan brethren in their turn have sought to stop the rot through the provisions of their hard-won Wakf Act of 1913. The truth is, in dealing with the estate of inheritance, the Hindu Law makes a reasoned adjustment between the two governing principles of conservation and distribution, and the result appears to be practically as satisfactory as anything else in the same field.

It is very doubtful if the proposed extension of the daughter's rights would mean any appreciable improvement in the general economic position of the woman, for what she will gain at one end as daughter she will lose at the other end as wife. On the other hand, there may be another side of the picture. For middle-class people the education of children is a heavy item of expense in the family budget, and at the present day these expenses have to be almost equally divided between the son and the daughter. The next important item to consider, perhaps

the heaviest item of capital expenditure the family is called on to face, is the daughter's marriage bill. If, in addition, the daughter comes in for a share in the inheritance, the scales are in danger of being unduly tipped against the son. It is easy to say that these and similar other inequalities may be left to be adjusted by will. But it is not so easy in practice. It is one thing to make a special provision for a daughter by will, but it is quite another thing to deprive her by will of her vested right under the ordinary law. Besides, the testamentary habit, together with the necessary legal service of requisite quality to assist and support that habit, takes time to grow, and is offset by certain disadvantages also. For one thing it entails a death-duty which would not be otherwise payable; in the next place, it almost inevitably gives a fillip to litigation.

In speaking of a girl's marriage expenses, it has to be confessed with very great regret that a considerable part of the expenses is extravagant and wasteful, and of no benefit whatsoever to the girl concerned. This state of things has got to be radically reformed, and an entirely fresh and liberal orientation should be put on the whole scheme of marriage expense, the primary end and objective of which should be to give the girl concerned as fair a start as the circumstances permit. To that end, except for the bridegroom's personal outfit, and one or two customary items, the bulk of the available

cash, now exacted under various plausibilities but really as a species of social ransom by the bridegroom's father, ought to be strictly appropriated as part of the bride's dower, to count as much her *stridhan* as her outfit of bridal ornaments and clothes, and should be applied to form the nucleus of what may be called her life-fund, in the shape, say, of a single-payment endowment policy, or any other suitable form of investment, to mature for payment in appropriate eventualities. Our life-offices may do a bit of real public service by devising suitable schemes of insurance for these funds to the maximum benefit of the girls concerned. As regards the expenses of entertainment, etc., at the bridegroom's house, it should be a point of honour with the bridegroom and his people to meet them out of their own pocket. Such a reform need not be considered to be altogether visionary or unpractical, for once a few leading families set the example, the vogue may catch on, and all parties concerned may willingly co-operate to make the appropriation for the bride's benefit as generous as the circumstances would permit.

Finally, it is almost waste of breath to repeat, as the learned judges have also done, that the present time is singularly inopportune for controversial legislation of this degree of complexity and of this magnitude, and that all further proceedings should, at least, be postponed till the return of more seasonable conditions of political weather.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

In the *Conversations* the greatness of holy places and the nature and duties of a monk's life are clearly and inspiringly brought out.... St. Nihal Singh's *Backward Glance at Prabuddha Bharata's Fifty Volumes* gives an illuminating account of what Swami Vivekananda did for the *Prabuddha Bharata*. Incidentally he brings

out vividly the ideals and ideas the Swami had upheld for the uplift of Indian women, and their importance for the reconstruction of national life in India. Also Sister Nivedita's work of love for India through the *Prabuddha Bharata* comes in for its merited meed of praise. The great writer's love of India and its culture also gleams through the pages of this brilliantly written serial....

Swami Lokeswarananda draws our attention to the supreme and urgent necessity of the resuscitation of spiritual values in national life more than any other thing.... *The Dance-Drama of Kerala* will give our readers an introduction to the nature of some of the treasures of Malayalam literature illustrating Hindu culture in Malabar.... In a brilliant essay Prof. Sharma discourses upon intellect, imagination, and intuition in *Limitations of Intellect*.... *The Power of Meditation* will be read by all for its clarity and simplicity of exposition of an abstruse subject. Mr. Rashbchari Mookerjee's article, *On the Draft Hindu Code*, gives excellent suggestions, born of long experience in the judicial line, about reform of Hindu laws, and he rightly pleads for a postponement, for the present at least, of such controversial legislation. But Hindu men and women must wake up, however, and seriously consider ways and means to re-organize their society to meet successfully the challenges of modern times. Mr. Mukerjee's article is an excellent contribution in this direction.

#### WORLD'S MOST TERRIFIC MISSILE

The entire world learnt with painful surprise the use of the new weapon of colossal destructive power—the atomic bomb—which loosens the pent up forces of the universe equal to over 20,000 tons of TNT" and again 'which represents one of the greatest scientific advances of history'. The Japanese have had a taste of the 'rain of ruin', the like of which has never been seen on the earth. It was no cheap discovery. 'The product of 2,000,000,000 dollars spent in research and production—the greatest scientific gamble in history—one of the most closely guarded secrets of the war.' Engines of destruction such as the magnetic mine, the pilotless plane, and the rocket bomb appear small compared to this latest discovery. The scientists who discovered it themselves may have been taken aback by the extent of damage caused. One cannot but shudder at the indiscriminate devastation caused to life and property. It

is said that even when one bomb only is dropped accurately, it would be sufficient to wipe the target area off the face of the earth. The reports said the awful effect of the bomb was such as if sonic giant bulldozer had swept across the area. Again it was said that the effect was equivalent to a severe earthquake, and the cloud of smoke that rose up into the air was as high as the Everest.

Man has overreached even Nature in his ability to release the evil forces of death and destruction. The use of the bomb has had its desired effect, and the war has been brought to a speedy end. But it spells disaster to humanity and civilization. The war to end war has turned out to be a myth. The promoters of peace are not at all sure of success in their efforts, but fear another war is inevitable. The next war, if and when it does come, will, no doubt, be several times more ruthless and revolutionary than the one that has just ended. *The Times* observes that history, especially the history of recent times in which instruments of destruction and torment are so rapidly multiplied, holds out no expectation that men will ever be deterred from war by fear alone, and, on the whole, that is to the credit of human nature. But if a secular course is to be laid, it must be by a positive love of peace. Reason will tell mankind that war is becoming, with certainty, suicidal. But reason will no more avail than an appeal to fear. Humanity must be able to call upon the deeper convictions.

It is only natural that there is anything but jubilation for the atomic bomb throughout the civilized world. Those who thought it necessary to use the bomb cannot fail to foresee its future consequences which appear menacingly ominous. Hanson Baldwin, one of America's best known military commentators, writing in the *New York Times*, warned America that she might have to 'reap the whirlwind' sown by the atomic bomb. He did not mince his words when he added :

Because our bombing has been more effective, and, therefore, more devastating, the name of America has become synonymous with destruction. Now we have been the first to introduce this new weapon of unpredictable effects which may bring us quick victory, but will sow the seeds of hate more widely than ever. Atomic energy may well lead to a bright new world in which man shares common brotherhood, or we may, beneath rockets and bombs, descend to a world of troglodytes.

But will all this appeal to man's reason

and higher nature, in the name of civilization, be a cry in the wilderness? We do hope better counsels will prevail and the nations who were in the vanguard of civilization will not succumb to the temptation of out-heroding Herod. It is encouraging to find that most people in the West are agreed that control (and, if possible, prohibition) of the use of this 'most terrific missile' must be rigidly exercised in the interests of the whole world. It should not be left in the hands of any one or more nations. The snake has to swallow its own poison, as they say. Humanity must bear the burden of its own follies. There is no alternative but to abolish recourse to armament and hold in check the harnessing of science for the enslavement of mankind. Democracy, uninspired by moral standards, may be as dangerous to future happiness of the world as autocracy or oligarchy. In this connection we may remember Swami Vivekananda's prophetic utterance :

The whole of Western civilization will crumble to pieces in the next fifty years if there is no spiritual foundation. It is hopeless and perfectly useless to attempt to govern mankind with the sword. Europe, the centre of the manifestation of material energy, will crumble into dust within fifty years, if she is not mindful to change her position, to shift her ground, and make spirituality the basis of her life.

#### A CALL TO YOUTH

Addressing the new graduates of the Madras University, the Hon. Mr. Justice K. P. Lakshmana Rao stressed the need of cherishing 'the normal and accustomed values of life' even in the midst of their careers and vocations. At the same time he warned them not to be led astray by tempting political or social doctrines that are pernicious to individual and national well-being. He said :

The world you are going to enter is one which has been transformed beyond all recognition by World War II . . . In this new world you will find great concern for the common man—his rights and duties, pains and pleasures. There will be idealists planning for Utopias under various labels of political thought. But one thing you will not find, even as the young men after the last Great War did not find, and that is 'the normal and accustomed values of life'. In their place you will find tradition laughed at, cynicism practised as a fine art, and altruism greatly discounted.

Yet, in spite of all these, or rather, in the face of all these, yours is *not to despair*; for, *full-blooded enthusiasm, great idealism, and determined courage* are all the peculiar *possessions of youth*. (Italics ours.) (Hindu)

Not only the graduates of the Madras University but the youth of the whole country cannot but feel deeply indebted to the Justice for his inspiring and instructive address. Our young men and women of colleges and schools will do well to specially bear in mind his stimulating and incomparable words of advice, exhorting them to cultivate good manners.

A high education without good tastes and good manners is a contradiction in terms. The ability to see the other man's point of view, the absence of intellectual arrogance, the thirst for knowledge for its own sake, the attitude towards others that could never be construed as offensive in words, gestures, or deeds: all these are qualities of a truly cultured mind.

The purpose of education is 'man making' and 'character building'—as Swami Vivekananda put it. The test of true character lies not in great performances but in the most common actions in day-to-day life. The learned Judge told his young hearers that character

means nothing more than a faith in the higher moral values; a faith that needs courage to support it at times of temptation and trial.

What is needed is faith in oneself, an active faith in the spiritual destiny of man, in the potential divinity of the soul. It is through such a living conviction of heart that selfless service and sacrifice are possible. Mr. Lakshmana Rao did well in drawing the attention of the educated youth to this aspect of social service.

Ours is a country in which have lived saints and sages who have all taught the gospel of selflessness and social service. I would, therefore, ask you to follow the ideal of service and sacrifice in whatever walks of life you find yourselves placed . . . I cannot do better than invoke the sacred sayings of the Lord in the Bhagavad Gita to serve as your ideal: 'Treating alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, success and defeat—prepare for the battle; thus will thou not incur sin'. 'Thy concern is with action alone, never with its fruits. So let not the fruits of action be thy motive, nor be thou attached to inaction.' (II. 38, 47)

It was very appropriate that the distin-

guished speaker specially drew the attention of the lady graduates that they were best fitted to bring wisdom and happiness to the country by their innate qualities of gentleness, patience, and persuasiveness. He complimented them on their being the safe custodians of the future destiny of the coming generations of men and women. We hope our young men and women who leave the universities year after year will not fail to live up to the ethical and spiritual ideals of the motherland.

#### 'WORLD PEACE' CONVENTION

A 'World Peace' Convention, organized by the Vedanta Society (Ramakrishna Mission), was held in London in the middle of August last.

Mr. Sorensen, M.P., who presided, said: 'India always stood against Fascism and Imperialism which brought about this war. Leaders of Indian movement were the greatest living pacifists of our time'.

Swami Avyaktananda, founder and president of the Vedanta Society, said: 'Problems of post-war world were more complex than those faced during the war'.

Mr. Roy Walker of Peace Pledge Union urged that the use of atom bombs should be outlawed. He described Mr. Gandhi as the 'greatest living pacifist of our time'.

Mr. Arthur Jackman of the World Congress of Faiths said: 'Not only atom bomb but war should be outlawed for all time. A genuine pacifist was a greater hero than a general . . . —A.P.I.

Peace is generally the last casualty in a war. There can be no real peace unless nations honestly desire it and sincerely try for it. Otherwise the so-called peace will turn out to be an interval between two wars during which both the victor and vanquished prepare themselves for a greater trial of strength. The end of hostilities does not necessarily bring in peace, as many of us think. At best, it indicates victory for one and defeat for another. Yet it is the common practice, at the end of war, for politicians and military leaders to be profuse in their assurances to the people that peace has been won and that the utmost will be done to usher in a new world order. Political leaders generally act as the mouthpiece of the nation to which they belong. Their

policies abroad are often directed to serve the interests of their own people at home. It is seldom the case that a whole nation is plunged into suffering on account of the selfish motives of a few individuals whom the nation has chosen as its representatives. Thus fascistic people have fascists as leaders, an imperialistic nation has imperialists as leaders, and democratic people have democratic leaders. Unless the powerfully armed nations renounce their lust for conquest and exploitation of other nations, wars are inevitable. The people as a whole or at least a great majority of them can exercise a restraining influence on their leaders and make them change their ways for the better.

The speakers at the peace convention were unanimous in their opinion that humanity has to abjure war and violence in order to live in peace. But as things are, the plea for disarmament seems to fall on deaf ears. 'We must never be caught out again,' declared a high military officer, 'the development of these defence weapons is a key to our future . . . I am trying to make this thing (atom bomb) so terrible in all its aspects that there will not be any more war.' Real disarmament cannot come so long as even a single nation chooses to remain armed. The British playwright, A.A. Milne, said,

War will cease when statesmen are intelligent enough to realize what the man in the street has known for a long time—that it is a wicked game and a fool's game.

Every statesman professes to be a champion of peace and liberty. But, in the field of action, most of them mean to 'hold their own' and are unwilling to 'liquidate' imperialism in the colonies and dependencies. The key to world peace lies in allowing each nation, big or small, coloured or white, unfettered liberty and national self-government. India and China have shown the way to permanent peace based on a spiritual civilization. There is no doubt that the war-worn nations will turn to India, once again, for the spiritualunction that heals the lacerated soul of man.

## GREATNESS OF INDIAN MUSIC

Dr. Leopold Stokowski, one of America's most famous conductors, has paid tribute of great praise to Indian music in recording his impressions of the characteristics of the music of India. He travelled widely in India with a view to studying Indian music at first hand. He says this first-hand experience convinced him 'Indian music is far more complex and important to world culture' than was suggested by some of the books written on the subject. He is a great admirer of Indian music and has visited India twice. He observed :

In India I had the impression of several musical cultures blended into one. The rhythmic basis of Indian music is of great importance, the grouping of rhythmic design lying back of the more prominent melodic features of the music.

One of the great characteristics of the music of India to my mind is its flexibility and freedom. While giving due consideration to traditions stemming from the past Indian music is free and improvised so that all powers of imagination in the musician are brought into play. In this way, the music of India is always creative, never a mere reproduction of what is, written or played, as sometimes happens with the music of Western countries. I was struck with the sensitive manner in which various kinds of music are made, the expression of the mood at certain times of day or night, or certain seasons of the year.

Even more striking is the way that every aspect of the music of India is intimately related to every aspect of the life and religious beliefs and cosmic conception of the people of India. I felt that Indian music was never separate from Indian life, but closely interwoven with all the thoughts and feelings of the people of India. In some Western countries music is regarded as an art, separate and abstract from life. This is never so in India where music and all the arts and every phase of life are unified and illumine each other, forming part

of one great conception of universality of life and existence. (*Bombay Chronicle Weekly*)

Music has tremendous influence over human mind and brings it into concentration. That is how music plays an important part in the religious life of India. Devotional songs, in addition to their excellence in form and technique, serve as the means of divine communion. Western music is superb, no doubt, in its perfection of harmony. But, as Dr. Stokowski says, their musical art is artificial, and unrelated to life and Nature. Ancient Indian music has undergone much change owing to Islamic influences. And modern theatrical music in India, though popular, is very different from classical music. The latter is becoming less and less common as it is more complicated and needs a greater amount of concentration. There have been musician-saints like Rama Prasad, Thyagaraja, Mira Bai, and Andal who attained to the highest spiritual illumination through one-pointed devotion to the Lord expressed in their songs. In India the spiritual significance of music has always been emphasized, though its entertainment value has not been minimized. It is no wonder that this master of Western music has felt it necessary to suggest that 'each part of India and each national group will keep its own music pure and unmixed'. Perhaps he did not fail to notice, in India, the usual tendency to imitate alien methods. We hope Indian musicians will stand on their own bottom and vindicate the greatness of Indian music.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE MIND OF MAHATMA GANDHI. COMPILED BY R. K. PRABHU AND U. R. RAO. Published by the Oxford University Press, Calcutta. Pp. xii+191. Price Rs. 3.

The English-reading public in India and abroad are more or less conversant with the well-known writings of Mahatma Gandhi. But his writings and speeches are found scattered over a number of years and in several different books and periodicals. The compilers of the volume under review deserve warm congratulations from one and all for their successful efforts in

gleaning the best and most valuable out of Gandhiji's works. When one thinks of the immensity of what he has spoken and written in the course of the past half a century, one cannot but admire the care and labour devoted to this compilation. In the preface we are told how 'a plan of a dozen volumes was drawn up, embodying Gandhiji's thoughts on such subjects as truth, non-violence, satyagraha, . . . etc. But owing to certain circumstances it was possible for the compilers to bring out only the present volume—undoubtedly the most outstanding one—containing the

gist of his thoughts' on these varied subjects. The subject-matter is dealt with under as many as thirty-five separate topical headings. Every one of these sections is replete with relevant extracts of profound significance. Gandhiji's impassioned utterances and inimitable expression of views on 'The gospel of truth', 'The gospel of non-violence', 'The gospel of love', 'The gospel of fearlessness', and 'India's Mission' are worth repeated perusal. His insistence on adherence to truth is something rarely to be met with among political leaders and patriots anywhere in the world: 'Let hundreds like me perish, but let truth prevail. Let us not reduce the standard of truth even by a hair's breadth for judging erring mortals like myself.' It is common knowledge that Gandhiji has accepted non-violence as the last article of his creed. But unfortunately some of his utterances in this connection have been misunderstood, and he is often misrepresented as a visionary who advocates the practice of such a futile and impossible ideal as non-violence. Gandhiji makes it quite clear that non-violence is not meant for all and sundry. 'I would risk violence a thousand times rather than emasculation of a whole race.' 'I do not say "eschew violence in your dealing with robbers or thieves or with nations that may invade India".' 'My non-violence does not admit of running away from danger and leaving dear ones unprotected.' 'Let me repeat for the thousandth time that non-violence is of the strongest, not of the weak.' 'If one has not the courage, I want him to cultivate the art of killing and being killed, rather than in a cowardly manner flee from danger.'

Though Gandhiji's name is intimately connected with the political life of the Indian people, he is very different from and far greater than a mere 'professional' politician. He loves India, nay, the whole world, from spiritual standpoint. As Sir S. Radhakrishnan has said in his brilliant foreword (to this book), Gandhiji's life and sayings bear eloquent testimony 'to the values for which this country (India) has stood for ages, . . . values which are neither national nor international but universal'. Gandhiji has not failed to draw the attention of Indians and non-Indians to the spiritual significance of India's mission. His resistance to Western civilization is only to 'its indiscriminate and thoughtless imitation' and not to any 'profitable assimilation'. Some of the other subjects presented in this volume are: value of prayer, temples, idolatry, significance of fasting, Hindu *brahmacharya*, and women. The last section, viz., *obiter dicta*, contains short extracts on diverse minor topics such as diet, education, self-purification, and vegetarianism. It is a superb collection and offers *multum in parvo*. A close perusal of these choice writings of Gandhiji will help to remove the many misconceptions about the soundness and practicality of most of his views. Yet, many a reader may find, in these writings, much that he cannot accept or subscribe to. This is but natural, as Gandhiji's views and ways of thinking and acting have been the target of intelligent criticism from responsible quarters. However, even those who honestly differ from Gandhiji in many respects cannot minimize the worth of this delightful publication. The general conception of the book is splendid and the arrangement of matter excellent. Mahatma Gandhi is essentially a friend of the poor and illiterate masses for whose amelioration his life and work are dedicated. The 'mind' of Gandhiji, portrayed in these pages, reveals a great intellect and a greater heart.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION, RECREATION, AND HEALTH EDUCATION FOR INDIA. By C. C. ABRAHAM AND OTHERS. Published by the Y. M. C. A. College of Physical Education, Saidapet, Madras. Pp. 34.

The importance of physical and health education can hardly be over-emphasized in our country. In England and America, boys and girls take considerable interest in physical exercises and games. But, in India, till recently one noticed a general apathy, both among the young and the old, to active outdoor exercises. It was deplorable to find our young men weak and languid, occupied more with their studies, while those of other countries were, as a rule, strong and well built. The Y. M. C. A. College of Physical Education, Madras—one of the few leading institutions offering a well planned course of training in athletics—has published this authentic and comprehensive guide to the right type of physical training and health education with a view to popularizing these in this country.

It is divided into two parts: (1) Physical Education and Recreation, (2) Health Education. In the first part, after a brief introduction and historical survey, the present position of physical education in the different educational institutions as well as in the urban and rural areas is clearly described. A well thought-out scheme for the introduction of physical education and recreation consonant with the social and national trends of India. Health education is another desideratum in our country. In the second part, a brief account is given of the course of health education, as organized by the Y. M. C. A. College. Though this course directly concerns a small number of men and women who become students of the College, the procedure is worth emulation by other institutions. The carefully drawn up 'Participative syllabi in health education for schools' will prove of immense help to those who are interested in organizing health education activities for schoolboys and schoolgirls in a systematic way. The question of training leaders in physical education and teachers in health education, and the problems of administration in either field of activity are briefly discussed.

According to the authors of this publication, though India has a rich heritage of physical education and recreation, she has not made proper use of the same for nation building purposes, as it is done in England, America, and Russia. This is only too true. They attribute this to a number of causes such as 'the ascetic philosophy of life', 'national inertia', 'nature and type of present-day education', and 'slowness on the part of the State' and educationists to recognize the value of physique and health. But one fails to understand how the ascetic philosophy of life can come in the way of physical education and health improvement. Moreover, we do not know how far it is correct to generalize that India follows an 'ascetic' philosophy of life. Elsewhere, the authors observe: 'A careful study of Indian culture reveals that, for many centuries, the people of India from the Vedic era lived a life in which adequate physical growth and development were the normal outcomes of a natural life.' In ancient India, 'wrestling was a great national sport' and rhythmic dances were very common. Indian kings and nobles encouraged physical culture and amply rewarded feats of physical prowess. It is wrong to say that 'the traditional Indian attitude to life is one of negation'. In the days of Rama and Krishna, when guns and bombs were un-

known, physical strength and skill were the best means of fighting an aggressor.

In the *upanishads*, we find passages exhorting the spiritual aspirant to be 'strong, brave, and of firm determination', for, 'the *atman* cannot be attained by one who is weak in body'. Though the ideals of life were renunciation and God-realization, the greatest emphasis was laid on the necessity and importance of possessing a strong, healthy constitution without which self-control and concentration of mind were not possible. If, today, we find most Indians weak and unhealthy, the chief reasons are lack of sufficient nutrition and ignorance of the laws of public health. As the authors of this brochure rightly say, the problems of physical education and health education are closely related to and largely dependent on the economic status and the standard of living of the masses. The solution of these problems, in a dependent country like India, is not as easy as it may appear.

**JOHN WOOLMAN, QUAKER.** By JANET WHITNEY. Published by George G. Harrap & Co., Ltd., 183, High Holborn, London, W.C. 1. Pp. 432. Price 21s.

In the Sahara of the barbaric and savage violence of Christian races, the Quakers and a few other sects like them have tried to stand for God, truth, and non-violence like refreshing oases. The life of John Woolman, Quaker, is a very illuminating volume showing the part that such lives have played in the actual christianization of the naturally violent and savage white races. This process of humanization has been a very slow one, and the terrible wars in the West are an indication that in spite of the veneer of civilization, the races of the Western world are at bottom really savage and barbaric. The glimpses of the treatment of the Negroes and Red Indians of America which the whites have meted out to them show how great is the need for the spread of true religion among the so-called Christian nations. How we wish the Christian Missionary Societies would follow the motto, 'Physician, heal thyself' and spend their money and energy in truly reclaiming the warlike whites to the noble path of truth and non-violence, instead of acting as pioneers for the re-introduction of the savagaries of Western civilization into the Eastern world. Not that we would not welcome true missionaries of God to come to the East and serve their fellow men, but the need in the West seems to us to be much greater.

How true even to this day are the words of this great Quaker.

'Man is born to labour, and experience abundantly sheweth that it is for our good; but where the powerful lay the burden on the inferior without affording a Christian education and suitable opportunity of improving the mind, and a treatment which we, in their case, should approve, that they themselves may live at ease and fare sumptuously and lay up riches for their prosperity, this... I doubt not, is sometimes the effect of a perverted mind; for while the life of one is made griev-

ous by the rigour of another it entails misery on, both.' (p. 129.)

John Woolman believed firmly in divine providence. He says: 'How deeply soever men are involved in the most exquisite difficulties, sincerity of heart and upright walking before God, freely submitting to His providence, is the most sure remedy. He only is able to relieve not only persons but nations in their greatest calamities.' Again, 'I find that to be a fool as to worldly wisdom and to commit my cause to God, not fearing to offend men who take offence at the simplicity of the truth, is the only way to remain unmoved at the sentiments of others'.

He hated oppression and injustice. He says: 'Though through gradual proceedings in unrighteousness, dimness hath come over many minds, yet the nature of things is not altered. Long oppression hath not made Oppression consistent with Brotherly Love, nor length of time through several ages made recompense to the posterity of those injured Strangers.'

One rises from a perusal of this book with an ennobled feeling and a deeper faith in the perfectibility of humanity.

#### BOOKS RECEIVED

**ROERICH PACT.** Published by New World Library. Pp. 35. Price Re. 1.

**HIND SWARAJ OR INDIAN HOME RULE.** By M. K. GANDHI. (REPRINTED 1944). Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Pp. xii+68. Price 8 As.

**PRANAYAMA.** By SARMA K. LAKSHMAN. (4TH EDITION.) Published by The Nature-cure Publishing House, Pudukkottai. Pp. 16.

**SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND MODERN INDIA.** By SWAMI JAGADISWARANANDA. Published by Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Calcutta. Pp. 65. Price 12 As.

**1. THE TEN PLAGUES OF MODERN CIVILIZATION.** Pp. 66. Price Rs. 3.

**2. POEMS.** Pp. xxvii + 160. Price Rs. 5.

**3. VILLAGE THEATRES.** Pp. 19. Price 10 As.

ALL BY TANDRA DEVI. Published by Tandra Devi Publications, Srinagar, Kashmir.

**NON-VIOLENCE IN PEACE AND WAR.** By M. K. GANDHI. (2ND EDITION.) Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Kalupur, Ahmedabad. Pp. xii + 589. Price Rs. 7.

**DRUGLESS HEALING.** By L. KAMESVARA SARMA. (3RD EDITION.) Published by The Nature-cure Publishing House, Pudukkottai. Pp. 51. Price Re. 1.

#### Bengali

**BHAVADHARA.** By ASHUTOSH GHOSH. Published by the author, 4n, Tarak Pramanik Road, Calcutta. Pp. 33+iv. Price 8 As.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SHISHUMANGAL PRATISHTHAN, CALCUTTA

#### REPORT FOR 1943-44

The Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Shishumangal Pratishthan, Calcutta, for the years 1943 and 1944 gives an account of the aims and objects, activities and financial position of the institution during the years under review. Since its inception in July 1932, this maternity hospital and child welfare centre of the Ramakrishna Mission has grown in extent and efficiency, and become most popular in the city. It is the outcome of a healthy and intelligent application of modern Western ideas and methods of maternity and child care to Indian conditions. The main objects of the institution are to render antenatal, natal, and post-natal care, to educate the public in these, and to train midwives and workers for carrying out these.

The activities of the institution fall under the following heads:

**Antenatal Care:** The most important feature of the institution is the rendering of antenatal care to expectant mothers and thus reduce maternal and infantile mortality to a minimum. Mothers were given instructions in the hygiene of pregnancy, diet, and preparation for confinement, through lectures, pamphlets, and individual advice. In 1943, the total number of new cases at the outdoor was 2,374 and the total of beds daily occupied in the indoor was 1,721. For 1944, the figures were respectively 3,064 and 2,084. The number of antenatal and friendly home-visits made by the health visitor was 1,252 in 1943 and 1,275 in 1944; 172 and 208 antenatal cases were admitted to the indoor department during 1943 and 1944 respectively.

**Hospital Confinement:** There were 75 permanent beds in the hospital during the years under review. Of these 21 were free and 4 partly free beds. The total number of deliveries was 1,662 in 1943 and 2,269 in 1944. 13,141 mothers and 11,630 babies were looked after in the hospital during 1943; 13,497 mothers and 14,042 babies were looked after during 1944. The hospital accommodated 696 free patients during 1943 and 867 free cases during 1944. Maternal death-rate was 0.73% in 1943 and 0.22% in 1944. Infantile death-rate was 6.5% in 1943 and 5.5% in 1944.

**Treatment of Gynaecological Cases:** The total number of new cases at the outdoor was 568 in 1943 and 941 in 1944. The total of beds daily occupied in the indoor was 621 in 1943 and 1,323 in 1944. Of the 62 in-patients admitted in 1943, all were discharged cured except one. In 1944, the number of in-patients was 130 all of whom were discharged cured except two.

**Training of Midwives:** The institution trains midwives (for Senior and Junior Midwifery Certificates under the Bengal Nursing Council) providing them with board and lodging. This Training School which had to remain closed for want of a qualified Matron till October 1944, has been reopened since November 1944. It has been recognized by the Bengal Nursing Council as a Training School for Senior and Junior midwives. During the period the Training School remained closed, the institution, however, trained a number of dais.

**Home Confinement:** Owing to certain difficulties

created by war-time emergency, the activities of the institution in connection with domiciliary maternity service were temporarily suspended. Even then some registered cases were safely confined in their homes.

**Post-natal Care:** Another activity of the institution is to render post-natal care to new-born infants and follow them up for at least a couple of years. This is done on a limited scale by regular examination of infants and toddlers brought to the weekly clinics of the institution, and also through periodic home-visits by the health visitor. The mothers are instructed about proper feeding, rest, habit training and so-forth. The total attendance at the post-natal clinic during the two years under review was 738 and 1,140 respectively. The health visitor made 907 and 2,402 home-visits for the follow-up of children during the two years respectively.

**Distress Relief:** During the years under report, the Shishumangal Pratishthan took part in distress relief work organized by the Ramakrishna Mission. Rice was distributed to hundreds of distressed families, and blankets worth Rs. 1,051/- were distributed among deserving patients of the institution.

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HOME OF SERVICE, BENARES

#### REPORT FOR 1944

We present below a short summary of the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares, during the year 1944. The Home, started in 1900, has completed the forty-fourth year of its useful career.

**Indoor Work:** The Indoor General Hospital contains 115 beds and takes care of poor and helpless sufferers. The total number of cases admitted during the year was 2,051. Of these 1,433 were cured, 260 were relieved, 110 were discharged otherwise, 110 died, and 134 remained under treatment at the end of the year. The daily average of cases was 95. The total number of surgical cases in the Indoor Hospital was 283, of which 225 were major cases. 165 cases were picked up and brought from the road-side and ghats.

The Refuge for aged and invalid men accommodated 25 men of whom only 5 could be kept permanently for want of funds. The Refuge for women accommodated 19 inmates during the year. 11 paralytic cases were treated under the trust fund created specially for the purpose. Under the Dharmashala Fund 297 men and women were given food and shelter.

**Outdoor Work:** The total number of new cases treated at the outdoor dispensaries was 84,008, and the total number of repeated cases was 2,06,228. The daily average attendance was 797. The total number of surgical cases was 1,168. Outdoor help in cash and kind was given to 178 helpless men and women of respectable families. Special and occasional relief in the shape of books for students and food for stranded travellers was given to 816 persons. Owing to the abnormal situation in Bengal, a large number of destitutes migrated to Benares. To help as many of these evacuees as possible distress relief work was organized during the year, on a moderate scale, by way of distribution of medicines, diet, cloth, and rice.

**Finance:** The total receipts for the year were

Rs. 58,121-1-M and total expenditure Rs. 57,153-1-6. The Income and Expenditure Statement for the year shows an excess of expenditure of Rs. 1,915-3-10 over income.

*Immediate Needs:* (1) A great many of the 190 beds, both in the Indoor Hospital and the Invalids' Homes, are not endowed. The cost of endowing a bed for the Surgical Ward is Rs. 4,500/-, for the General Ward Rs. 3,500/-, and for Invalids' Homes Rs. 3,000/-.

(2) Bedding and clothing. (3) Rs. 25,000/- for a separate block for the Outdoor Dispensary. (4) Rs. 20,000/- for a Septic Surgical Ward. (5) Funds for general expenditure which has risen very high in these days of stress and strain.

Contributions for the Home of Service may be sent to Hony. Asst. Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Luxa, Benares.

#### RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, TRICHUR

##### REPORT FOR 1944

The report of the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Vilangam, Trichur (Cochin), for 1944, presents a short account of the activities of the institution during the year. The activities fall under the following heads:

*Vidyamandir:* The strength of the school (including high school, lower secondary, and primary departments) during the academic year was 542 of which the number of boys was 316 and the number of girls 206. There were 181 backward-class and 72 depressed-class pupils. One more division was opened in Form I. Besides usual routine work, the pupils took part in games and literary unions, and conducted a manuscript magazine. The co-operative society of the school, run by the boys and girls irrespective of caste, bought and sold school requisites and thus gave the boys practical training in co-operative business. In addition, handicrafts like spinning and needle work, and such arts as music and dancing are also taught in the school.

*Industrial School:* The Industrial School, which was shifted to its own separate building, had nine looms and produced 1,503 yds. of cloth. It provides training in weaving.

*Gurukul and Matrimandir:* Of the 25 inmates who resided in these homes, 13 were boys and 12 were girls. 19 pupils were maintained free. There were 12 Harijan pupils. The inmates were trained up in self-help and household work. They took part in daily worship and attended scriptural classes.

*Religious:* Regular weekly religious classes were held in the Trichur Central Jail for Hindu prisoners. Religious classes were also held for the workers, and pupils recited the Gita daily. Anniversary celebrations were duly held, and lectures and *bhajan* were organized.

*Library:* A separate building for a library was erected during the year under review, at Punkunnam (Trichur) with the help of a charity endowment.

*Philanthropic:* The following items of relief and

service continued to be done as in the previous year: Distribution of cloth, medicine, and cash; house thatching and roofing; daily noon-feeding of Harijan pupils; free milk distribution to school and village children.

*Present Needs:* The following are some of the urgent needs of the institution, and the amount of money required is noted for each item: (1) Additional block for school, Rs. 4,000/-.

(2) Completion of dispensary building, Rs. 4,000/-.

(3) New buildings for Matrimandir, Rs. 12,000/-.

(4) Dormitory for boys, Rs. 12,000/-.

(5) Roofing of and other improvements to Industrial School, Rs. 2,500/-.

(6) Extension of kitchen block, Rs. 8,000/-.

#### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, BRINDABAN

##### REPORT FOR 1944

The activities of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban (Muttra), during the year 1944, were as follows (according to the thirty-ninth annual report of the institution):

*Indoor Work:* There are 55 beds in the indoor hospital. The total number of cases admitted was 1,453, of which 1,301 were cured and discharged, 78 were discharged otherwise, 37 died, and 51 remained under treatment at the end of the year. The total number of surgical cases (including 'eye') was 2,552, of which 348 were major operations. An indoor eye department, started in 1943, has proved of immense help to those suffering from eye diseases, several of whom come from far off places.

*Outdoor Work:* The outdoor dispensary treated, during the year, 24,327 new cases and 46,226 repeated cases. The average daily attendance (new and old) was 194. There were 753 surgical cases in all. Monthly and occasional relief was given to 63 persons, in cash or kind. Clothes and blankets were supplied free to the needy.

Some of the immediate needs of the Sevashrama are: (1) The estimated cost of rebuilding the female ward of the indoor hospital, together with equipments, is Rs. 25,000; (2) the endowment of at least 15 beds at a cost of Rs. 75,000 (Rs. 5,000 for one bed) is a great necessity; (3) a sum of Rs. 15,000 is required for providing sufficient accommodation for the workers and nurses; (4) the setting up of a laboratory and an X-ray apparatus will cost a sum of Rs. 25,000.

#### VEDANTA SOCIETY, SAN FRANCISCO

The program of work of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, San Francisco, for the month of June 1945, shows that the Swami-in-charge delivered eight bi-weekly lectures during the month, in addition to holding the usual class on every Friday. Some of the subjects taken up for discourse were: 'One World, One Religion', 'The Science of Self-mastery', 'What seeing God means', and 'What is Spiritual Practice?'

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. L.

DECEMBER, 1945

No. 12



“उत्तिष्ठत जापत प्राप्य वराभिवोधत ।”

“Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached”

## CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI SHIVANANDA

Death in Benares—Its spiritual advantage—A devotee is unconcerned where he dies—The Self is ageless without beginning and end—The world an illusion—The monastery chapel a veritable Kailasa—The early morning an ideal time for meditation—Days of ecstasy with the Master.

(Place: *Belur Monastery*. Time: *October 1923*.)

Swami Suddhananda was going to Benares from Belur. In that connection, while discussing the spiritual advantages of living in the holy city, Mahapurushji said: ‘So and so wrote me, pressing me to come to Benares. Swami Sachidananda<sup>1</sup> also wrote, apprehensively, “We hear you have not been very well. You have had enough activity; so do come to Benares. Let the younger generation manage things now. It is for you to come and retire in Benares.”

‘Swami Sachidananda fears my body will not last very long and wants me to spend my last days in the holy city. But with us every place is the same as Benares. Wherever and in whatever state we die, it is equal to dying in Benares. As long as the Master wants us here in the flesh, death cannot touch us. “If the Lord protects, who can kill?” When the summons for release

comes from the Lord Himself, nobody can keep us here.

‘We are ever ready to depart from this life. It is worldly people who, in old age, think of retiring to Benares for its spiritual advantages. We belong to a different category. The Master has graciously given us everything. Where and under what condition his devotees give up their bodies, is immaterial. Their future is insured, even as is the future of one dying in Benares. Swami Trigunatita<sup>2</sup> gave up his life in San Francisco. Did this affect him? He was certainly united with the Master after death. The heart of a man in which God, the Lord of the universe, is enshrined, is as good as holy Benares. Such a man has no reason to be afraid.’

\* \* \*

It was Sunday, about nine in the morning.

<sup>1</sup> A senior monk of the Order.

<sup>2</sup> A disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

Mahapurushji was seated on a couch in his room. Many devotees were assembled and interesting things were under discussion. Becoming inquisitive, a devotee asked, 'Maharaj, how old are you ?'

Swami : 'You ask the age of my body ? I don't know exactly. Most probably it would be about seventy or seventy-two years.'

Devotee : 'In that case, you would be three times older than we.'

Swami : 'Possibly. Three times ! Why three times ? I have existed through eternity. The Self, unaffected by disease and old age, is beginningless, endless, eternal, and immortal. Pure, illuminated, and free, It dwells in every being as Consciousness itself. This counting of age by years—ten, twenty, fifty, a hundred, and so on, is a figment of ignorance. The immutable being whose nature is truth, exists eternally without undergoing any change at any time.'

'This world, fashioned by ignorance, is illusory and our whole trouble comes from mistaking the illusory for the real. Deer often mistake a mirage for water and jump into it in a body. From a distance the sand appears a vast expanse of water with play of waves. Duped by this appearance, the deer run and run for the water and finally lose their lives in the sand. In a similar way a man who considers this ephemeral world real, causes himself endless sorrow. He is scorched here, as it were. Not for a moment does he think he will some day have to leave this world. He wants, foolishly, to arrange his affairs on a permanent basis. Perhaps he buys a brick-house, a large estate, and does other things of that sort. Yet, however he tries to make things permanent, how long will they last ?'

Addressing an elderly gentleman, the Swami said : 'Now, please go to the chapel after washing yourself in the Ganges. We have made our chapel a veritable Kailasa or Vaikuntha (abodes of Shiva and Vishnu, respectively). There, in the chapel, is the living presence of Sri Ramakrishna, and also of the Holy Mother, Swamiji, and other disciples of the Master. Whenever I enter the

chapel I feel that I am in Kailasa itself. Often I go there and sit for meditation, and my heart is filled with joy.'

Addressing a monk who was seated near, the Swami asked, 'When do you go to the chapel ?'

Monk : 'In the morning about nine or ten, and again in the evening.'

Swami : 'Don't you go there early in the morning ?'

Monk : 'No, Maharaj, early in the morning I meditate on my bed.'

Swami : 'Why on the bed ? Get up early, wash yourself, and go to the chapel to meditate there. Why, of all places, do you meditate on the bed ? It is not a good practice. Of course, when sitting elsewhere is inconvenient, it is different. We have learned from experience that the moment you sit on the bed you feel lethargic and sleepy. The bed and its pillows have a tendency to pull you down and make you go to sleep. If possible, I try to avoid sitting on the bed. At the early hour of dawn when the chapel is not open, I may sit for a while on the bed, but later I go to the chapel and enjoy my meditation there.'

'The morning is the ideal time for meditation. It is silent and quiet all around. Nature is peaceful. With little effort the mind becomes absorbed in meditation. Invariably I awaken when the clock strikes three, whatever be the time of my going to bed.'

'We noticed that the Master would not sleep at all after three o'clock. He was in the habit of sleeping lightly—an hour or two sufficed him. Arising from bed he would start taking the name of the Lord. Sometimes he chanted *Om*, sometimes he clapped his hands and repeated the name of the Mother, or, perhaps, he walked up and down taking the name of Hari. He would awaken those of us who were sleeping in his room. Approaching us, one by one, he would say : "My boys, are you awake ? Get up and take the name of the Lord." His ecstatic chanting of God's name would be going on all the time. Having no consciousness of the outer

world, he would, while chanting, sometimes go out on the adjoining porch—nude like a child.

‘Some days he would start *keertan*, accompanied with drums and cymbals, and we would join him. Mostly he would sing only the names of God, occasionally improvising words and phrasés. Sometimes he danced in ecstasy. Ah! How graceful was his dance! He would then be transformed beyond recognition. It is impossible to describē his unique spiritual raptures! He

had an unusually sweet voice, the like of which we have never heard anywhere. The *keertan* would continue till the late hours of the morning. The Master’s ecstasies were contagious, making all ecstatic. The ceaseless repetition of the Lord’s name made the place a heaven. In what joy did we pass our days with the Master!’

Thinking of his association with Sri Rama-krishna, Swami Shivananda became deeply absorbed, as if unable to speak any more.

## CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS

BY THE EDITOR

*It is one and the same Avatar that, having plunged into the ocean of life, rises up in one place, and is known as Krishna, and diving again rises in another place, and is known as Christ.—Ramakrishna*

### I

Christmas bells will be ringing this month and there will be the usual festivities and merrymaking, perhaps on a larger scale. We Hindus naturally rejoice whenever anybody of whatever creed, prays to God and is happy in His name. For the problem of apparently antagonistic creeds was solved ages ago in India; and it has become the accepted creed of the nation that, whatever might be a man’s personal beliefs about God and his ways of worshipping Him, other men who differ from him have an equally indubitable right to believe in Him and worship Him in their own manner, without being compelled by force or fraud to change their beliefs and ways. Like an experienced dealer in jewels, the Hindu is able to spot and fix the value of any gem of religious thought or experience, wherever it may have found expression. This catholicity, this universal tolerance for freedom of thought and worship, has been the result of centuries of efforts towards the harmonizing of the scattered

and apparently contradictory religious experiences of the innumerable sects that have sprung up in the fertile field of religion in India. No other country in the world can show such a vast, and almost bewildering, variety of religious belief; and no other country in the world has been able to find the harmony, the thread of unity, which runs through all such religious experiences. As the American weekly, *Time*, puts it :

Every nation is obsessed with one problem which is the measure of its capacity for greatness: Egypt with immortality; Greece with beauty; Rome with administration and law; France with nationalism; Germany with war; Britain with the freedom of the individual man. India, islanded by sea and land, haunted by the hourly wanton foreclosure of life by death and disease, found that its obsession was the soul and its Creator, and the problem of good and evil. It embodied this vision in one of the world’s great faiths, Buddhism, and in religious works of great power, the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*. In its obsession it worshipped God under all forms, from inexpressible abstraction to inexpressible obscenity...

Even from the earliest times the Hindu genius recognized that the God whom men ignorantly worship in various ways as ‘their’ God is but the one God, the God of all. As the Gita says: In whatever way men worship Me, along these same ways do I fulfil

their desires ; it is My path, O Son of Pritha, that men tread in manifold ways.

It is no wonder, therefore, that the Hindu mind is able to grasp the fundamental unity that runs through all the religions. That is why Hindus respect Buddha, Mahavira Jina, Confucius, Zoroaster, Krishna, Christ, Mohammed, Nanak, Kabir, Chaitanya, Ramakrishna and all the other prophets or saints who have ever borne testimony by their lives and teachings to the reality of the spiritual element in the world. Not only this, alone of all religious systems of thought Hinduism has been able to assess the respective places and values of each religious experience in the whole scheme of religious development in a scientific manner, God without form (or the Godhead as Eckhart puts it), and God with form (or God as a Person); God transcendent and God immanent :—all these have found their proper place in a coherent system, independent of the circumstances of time, place, or race.

## II

If, then, the Hindu mind is inclined to accept the validity of the real teachings of Christ, it is not because it has become 'Christian' in the Roman Catholic, Protestant, Presbyterian, Baptist, Seventh Day Adventist or any other of the innumerable types of religious belief current among professed Christians, but because Christ in his teachings has only echoed some of the truths that have been the age-long and priceless possession of Indian culture. By his universal tolerance the Hindu has, however, laid himself open to the wilful misrepresentation and exploitation by misguided and fanatical followers of other religions, especially Christianity and Mohammedanism. When the Hindu concedes the possibility that God has not left any part of the world without witnesses to His love and mercy in the persons of the saints and prophets, the proselytisation-mad mind of the foreign missionary or his native underlings immediately snatches up this assertion and straightway twists it to suit its own ends.

Such fanatics begin to proclaim to all the world that the Hindus are ready to become Christians because, forsooth, the Bible is being constantly quoted by Indians when they talk even in public. All Hindus know what value to attach to such misrepresentations. The matter could, however, have been ignored as the fond delusion of a devoted, though fanatical, follower of Christ but for the dangerous and intrinsically anti-religious spirit which it embodies.

Some enlightened and liberal critics may say that nobody nowadays takes the fanatical proselytising missionary seriously. But we are afraid that this is a wrong reading of the situation. The fact of the matter is that all religions based on *bhakti* towards a Personal God claim an exclusive authority and uniqueness for that God, whether it be Kali, Krishna or Christ, and thus they carry in their very texture the germs of fanaticism and intolerance. Aldous Huxley has brought out the advantages and dangers of the religions based on *bhakti* very clearly and forcibly in his book, *Ends and Means*. We quote here a passage :

For example, it is manifest that *bhakti* directed towards deified leaders and personified nations, classes or parties must result in evil, not only for society, but ultimately (whatever the immediate good effects in regard to the minor virtues) for the individual as well... It is an extremely significant fact that, before the coming of the Mohammedans, there was virtually no persecution in India. The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang, who visited India in the first half of the seventh century and has left a circumstantial account of his fourteen-year stay in the country, makes it clear that Hindus and Buddhists lived side by side without any show of violence. Each party attempted the conversion of the other; but the methods used were those of persuasion and argument, not those of force. Neither Hinduism nor Buddhism is disgraced by anything corresponding to the Inquisition; neither was ever guilty of such iniquities as the Albigensian Crusade or such criminal lunacies as the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Moslems who invaded India brought with them the idea of a God who was not the order of the arms of being, but its general. *Bhakti* towards this despotic person was associated with wholesale slaughter of Buddhists and Hindus. Similarly *bhakti* towards the personal God of Christianity has been associated, throughout the history of that religion, with the wholesale slaughter of pagans and the retail torture and murder of heretics.

As long as the adherents of a particular form of worship of God are filled with the obsession that their individual salvation is

assured if they can add by any methods, fair or foul, violent or non-violent, to the number of the 'sheep' professing their way of worship and belief, so long the danger referred to by Huxley in the above passage will continue to dog men's footsteps. It may be true that under modern conditions conversions under threat of violence are not ordinarily possible, though even such cases are not indeed quite rare. But the spirit of intolerance and fanaticism have taken new guises and forms which are no less reprehensible and harmful to true religious freedom than conversion through violence. Using the powerful lever of economic pressure and political prestige dis honourable attempts are being made, often away from the glare of publicity, by Christian missionaries who come as ostensible friends of India. We hope to deal with the question of proselytisation in greater detail on another occasion. Our object here is just to point out during this Christmas month the menace that the missionaries are proving to real freedom of worship for non-Christians.

### III

Some of the missionary attempts to sabotage freedom of worship finds a glaring, though ridiculously pathetic, example in *The Christ of the Indian Road* by Dr. Stanley Jones. This gentleman, though a Protestant, seems to beat the Roman Catholics in his zeal for proving the efficacy of Christian missionary propaganda. Let us cite a sample or two :

But there is a remarkable movement at the other end of society among the higher castes. The movement among the low castes is called the Mass Movement; this other movement I would call a mass movement in mind towards Christ as a Person....

Nine years ago in the National Congress at Poona a Hindu gentleman in addressing the Congress used the name of Christ. There was such an uproar and confusion that he had to sit down unable to finish his speech. That name of Christ stood for all that India hated, for He was identified with empire and the foreign rulers. He had not yet become naturalized on the Indian Road. But in the meantime a dissociation of Jesus from the West had been made so that nine years later when that same Indian National Congress met, the Hindu president in giving his presidential address quoted great passages from the New Testament, took out bodily the account of the crucifixion of Jesus from John's Gospel; there were some seventy references to Christ in that Congress. Mrs. Naidu, India's able

poetess and Nationalist, sent a poem to the Congress to be read, entitled, "By Love Serve One Another" —a Scripture quotation.

Through the literature and addresses of India's leaders phrases and sentences from the New Testament run almost like a refrain.

Even the Arya Samaj, which is the bitterest opponent and whose leader said in a recent speech, 'You may forget your name, you may forget your mother, but do not forget that the missionaries are the enemies of your country and your civilization'—nevertheless, in a recent editorial in their principal organ, the *Vedic Magazine*, they call Gandhiji 'This Modern Christ'. Against the missionary, but unconsciously for his message—Christ !

The book contains many such tit-bits to prove that what the missionary fondly wishes is actually happening ; but Dr. Jones seems to be unconsciously aware that there is something 'phony' about what he talks. For he says further on :

But one word of caution before closing. Do not misunderstand me. I am not satisfied with an interest in Jesus—I cannot be satisfied this side of allegiance—utter and absolute (Note the fanatical touch of the words—Ed. P. B.). But if you give me an inch in the soul of India, I will take it and appeal for that next inch until the whole soul of this great people is laid at the feet of the Son of God.

We shall not be surprised if this article of ours is also construed as showing that Hindu India is becoming Christian !

### IV

Christianity and the 'Christian' peoples ! To judge them by the canon, 'By their fruits ye shall know them', it is becoming increasingly clear to unbiased men that if ever there was a creed unsuited to the temperament of the Germanic (including the Anglo-Saxon) and Latin races, it is the gospel supposed to have been preached by Christ. For the gospel of Christ is but Buddhism in a new garb. Hinduism and Buddhism say, 'Ahimsa paramo dharmah'—non-killing is the highest virtue. Christ echoed, Thou shalt not kill. But 'Christian' nations have together killed, as a matter of historical fact, more people, not to speak of animals, than all the non-Christian nations put together have ever done.

Take the second commandment. Even primitive races acknowledge its necessity and importance. In amplification of the second commandment Christ is reported to have said :

But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart....But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

And where do 'Christian' nations stand in this respect now? To put it mildly, they are as far from the sayings of Christ in this matter as hell is from heaven, Dr. John H. Stokes, Director of the Institute for the Control of Syphilis, of the University of Pennsylvania, says:

The 'sexualisation' of our type of civilization—with its emphasis on sex in clothes, movies, pin-up girls, advertisements, and conversation—stimulates erotic impulses at the same time that modern equipment has nearly eliminated the counter-balance of exhaustion from physical labour.—*Readers' Digest*, Jan. 1945.

There is another sidelight into the position in Great Britain:

LONDON, Oct. 14.—Britain's man-to-woman relations—already an official source of worry to the British government—are becoming increasingly fretful.

When the London court term opened last week it was faced with 4,019 divorce cases, a greater number than in any previous term.

Use of contraceptives reportedly is increasing. Many London shops are devoted almost exclusively to the sale of such devices, although the Church of England continues to frown upon the practice.

Several such shops on London's main streets display their merchandise in shop windows side by side with various rejuvenators. One is located conspicuously just off Piccadilly Circus while the near-by bars and restaurants are thronged nightly by British civilians and Allied servicemen.

Soon the government will begin to quiz cross section of British wives to learn why more are not having children.

Persons with marital troubles are consulting a private group called the 'Marriage Guidance Council' in increasing numbers.—A.P.A.

One can easily imagine the condition in war-torn Europe. One is tempted to ask, where is the 'Christian' missionary, leave alone Christ, on the roads of 'Christian' countries?

On the other hand, Christ's emphasis on chastity was a cardinal principle in Hindu life from the days of the *Vedas* and the *upanishads*. What a grand definition *Patanjali* gives of it: The vow of *brahmacharya* should be *sarvabhauma*, absolute. It should be practised irrespective of race, place, or time. Hinduism has considered these things as fundamental to any civilization based on spiritual values: Non-injuring, truthfulness,

Christian Gospels are but a faint echo of these. *Brahmacharya* increases physical and mental energy; these energies directed under the banner of truthfulness and non-injuring of others lead to individual and social uplift. This has been the method Hindu leaders have advocated from time immemorial for spiritual progress. This has made the 'mild Hindu' what he is; he does not hate foreigners for their colour or creed, dress or manners, because he has learnt from centuries of conscious evolution that the path of social progress lies in brotherliness and co-operation between man and man. *Religion is not a forced faith in any credo, or mystical gobbledegook.*' It is a matter of 'realization', as the Hindus say. The history of the 'Christian' nations shows that their 'Christianity' has led them only on the path of cut-throat intraspecific as well as interspecific competition. These nations are now in their heyday of national youth, and are exhibiting great social energy. But national old age also sets in, leading to the decline and disappearance of whole races, unless the leaders take heed and guide their people aright. Chastity, equally for men as for women, is one of the primary conditions which can arrest the decline of nations and lead to spiritual growth.

Now turn to another commandment: Thou shalt not steal. Is it a 'Christian' virtue only? Has there been any body of civilized men and women in the world who have not recognized the anti-social character of stealing and its danger to the spiritual growth of the individual? But highway and highsea robbery is not stealing perhaps, and that is why 'Christian' nations vie with one another in robbing the lands and raw materials not only of non-Christian nations, but also of 'Christian' nations! How often have the 'Christian' missionaries been used as 'baits' by these 'Christian' nations!

Then again, Christ said, 'Resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also.' Christ is also reported to have said, 'Love your enemies,

that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you'. These are the Buddhistic and Jaina doctrines over again. The Hindus considered that only the sanyasis were fit to follow such an extreme path. Swami Vivekananda clearly explains the Hindu view on this matter thus :

In reading the Bhagavad Gita, many of you in Western countries may have felt astonished in the second chapter, wherein Sri Krishna calls Arjuna a hypocrite and a coward because of his refusal to fight, or offer resistance, on account of his adversaries being friends or relatives making the plea that non-resistance was the highest ideal of love....Of like nature is the difference between resistance and non-resistance. One man does not resist because he is weak, lazy, and cannot because he will not; the other man knows he can strike an irresistible blow if he likes; yet he not only does not strike but blesses his enemies. The one who from weakness resists not, commits a sin, and as such cannot receive any benefit from the non-resistance; while the other would commit a sin by offering resistance....Then having the power, if we renounce it and do not resist, we are doing a grand act of love; but if we cannot resist, and yet, at the same time, try to deceive ourselves into the belief that we are actuated by motives of the highest love, we are doing the exact opposite....

—*Complete Works*, I, p. 36-37.

If thousands in Europe and America are giving up 'Christianity' it is because they have not been able to grasp the ideal of non-resistance, a peculiarly Hindu and Buddhistic doctrine of life. The Jews crucified Christ physically. The 'Christian' nations have done so spiritually.

## V

If we have applied the lancet to the abscesses of arrogance and intolerance of 'Christian' missionaries and militarists, it is only with a view to let out the poison, and help the patients to a safe recovery. If our 'Christian' friends in 'Christian' lands will get mental satisfaction by the supposition that the whole world is turning 'Christian' we wish them joy of their fancies. But we are not going to be 'Christians' in the sense in which they believe they are 'Christians'. We agree with and admire Christ, because like many other teachers he taught the people of his age the way to God. Roses, in whichever country they may bloom, evoke the

admiration of every one who has an eye to beauty. We Hindus enjoy appreciating and loving the men of God of all races and times. Just as scientific truths are neither British, American, German, Japanese, or Russian, but belong to all those who can understand them and utilize them, so are religions not the patented articles of any single tribe or race. They belong to all humanity. But untruth, insincerity, and pride, and a claim to be the *sole* repository of divine truth, and the *sole* channel of divine grace are the vices which finally undermine the strength of all religions. Let 'Christians', therefore, in this Christmas month, beware, lest they should instal false idols in their hearts while pretending to be iconoclasts. Belief in Christ as God, as the Messiah, as the only begotten Son; belief in the Immaculate Conception; belief in Transubstantiation or Consubstantiation; belief in one Atonement, one Resurrection, and one Final Assize; belief in the Doctrine of the Trinity; and belief in the uniqueness of the incarnation of Christ, and that only those who 'believe in Christ' (whatever that may mean) are saved, and the rest are eternally damned —these are the corroding accretions of theological thought which disintegrate the rock of true religion. The sooner 'Christian' peoples give up these meaningless mystifications and join hands with the religious-minded people of all nations in destroying ignorance, poverty, pestilence, and oppression, and in building up love of God in human hearts by exemplifying it in the love and service of His creatures, the better it will be for true peace and goodwill on earth. Then their 'prince of peace' would not have died in vain on the cross, for, like all true sons of God, he taught supreme love to God and a love for fellow men like that we hold for ourselves (*Mark* xii. 29-31), and was not concerned with speculative questions about God nor with abstract theories of His relationship to the soul and to the world.

# A BACKWARD GLANCE AT PRABUDDHA BHARATA'S FIFTY VOLUMES

By ST. NIHAL SINGH

(Continued)

## 6. After the Master's Passing Away

With the passing, from mortal ken, of the Master, a phase had ended in the life of *Prabuddha Bharata*. No longer could the disciple-editor go out into the forest and hear the Swami descant upon themes of immediate and intrinsic interest. Nor could he cast in the form of interview-articles all that he could remember of the information to him imparted quietly, non-objectively, pleasantly, in the course of these rambles. To him, perhaps more than to any one else within the organization built up by Vivekananda, or outside it, this physical separation was epochal in character.

If, however, this parting created problems, it offered a challenge. A gage had been thrown down by the Fates, as it were—a gage that stared the conductor of the magazine squarely in the eye. He could not escape it even if he wished.

That wish was not within him. It could not be within him. He knew the value the Master had attached to this particular form of the Mission's activity. Had not he written in his own clear, firm hand, years and years earlier :

....I am writing no book on Hinduism just now. I am simply jotting down my thoughts. I do not know if I shall publish them. What is in books? The world is too full of foolish things already.

If you (his disciple 'A')<sup>1</sup> could start a magazine on Vedantic lines it would further our object. Be positive; do not criticize others. Give your message; teach what you have to teach and there stop. The Lord knows the rest....

....If you are really my children you will fear nothing, stop at nothing. You will be lions. We must rouse India and the whole world. No cowardice. I shall take no 'nay'.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Swami Atulananda, who spent several years in the United States of America, and is, fortunately, still with us, though, I understand, very ill.

<sup>2</sup> *The Epistles of the Swami Vivekananda*, No. 26. Written from the United States of America in 1894 and reproduced in *Prabuddha Bharata*, No. 131 (Vol. 12), June 1907.

There stood, crystal clear, the importance the Master attached to work through current literature. In a few words he had also indicated the methods.

Again, in chalking out the institutions that he wished to set up in Madras, he had stressed the need for establishing vehicles through which the cultural concepts and vitalizing ideas could be carried, periodically, to the homes of the people at large. He had written :

....After taking a far and wide view of things, my mind has now been concentrated on the following plan :

First, it would be well to open a Theological College...., and then gradually extend its scope; to give a thorough education to young men in the Vedas and the different Bhashyas and Philosophies, including a knowledge of other religions of the world.

Second, at the same time a paper in English and the vernacular should be started as an organ of the College.

This is the first step to be taken, and huge things may grow out of small undertakings....\*

Few Indians of his generation, or, for that matter, of any generation, had understood the relative merits of current literature and books as the Swami Vivekananda did. Few Indians do today—even today—though we regard ourselves as moderns, greatly in advance of our forbears—infinitely wiser.

Tomes written by savants have their value. So also have brochures. They impart knowledge—awaken impulses. Some of the most potent movements originated from a leaflet—a pamphlet—a book. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is a classic example. It set a match to the atmosphere filled with the tinder of freedom and helped to destroy slavery.

For effect that does not lose its vitality, there is, however, nothing like a periodical. It makes its appearance at stated intervals. The interval may be short or long. If it is

\* *ibid.* No. 27. Written from 541, Denborn Avenue, Chicago, 3rd January 1895, and published in the September issue of the same volume.

attractive in garb and satisfying in contents, its delivery by hand or through the post is eagerly awaited and the physical contact, in itself, causes excitement. Be that excitement ever so mild, it is an outward expression of the interest that is being renewed within the mind. Mental sustenance is, moreover, maintained without stain. One does not become jaded. Each succeeding impulse serves to revitalize old impulses and they, in turn, generate new sensations, resolves, and activities.

Most persons engaged in work of this description lack insight into the processes of the mind. They are, therefore, ignorant of the psychological reactions their ink-shots actually create.

With Vivekananda it was otherwise. He understood the mechanism of the mind. He was familiar with its workings. No wonder that he accentuated the need, stressed the utility, of the recurring (rhythmically recurring) contact, for a space, of the writer's mind with that of the reader and then release for another measured space.

\* \* \*

Had the Master taken to current literature, he, with his insight into human nature and with the clarity and cogency of expression that distinguished his writing, might easily have been the pre-eminent journalist of his age. It is just as well, however, that he devoted his time and activities to other concerns. Those concerns were, to be sure, of even a more fundamental nature than journalism could ever be.

His grasp of the essentials of the journalistic art and craft—I use both words advisedly and believe that some day they are sure to be coupled with the word science—enabled him to be a directing force the value of which cannot possibly be exaggerated. Swami Swarupananda, who, more than any other writer, benefited from that grasp, is no longer with us. Otherwise he would, I am convinced, have joined me in paying this tribute.

That editor of *Prabuddha Bharata* was fortunate in a special sense. Not only did

the guru leave journalism alone, but he, in addition, left the editor to conduct the magazine the best he could. Appreciation and encouragement he had—and these without stint. No nagging, however.

As an organizer, Vivekananda would have been rare at any time, but was particularly so in the age—for India, alas! a degenerate age, an age of psychological as well as political slavery, as it was. With the exception of Jamsetjee Nusserwanjee Tata, who helped to give a new direction to Indian life, there was hardly a man in the entire country who knew how to inspire men to set to doing work that needed to be done and had the wisdom and the will to give them a hand, as did Vivekananda: and Vivekananda was dealing with subtler materials and for higher purposes. 'It would have been altogether inconsistent with the Swami's ideas of freedom', wrote one who had sat at his feet for years, 'to seek to impose (up) on a disciple his own conceptions'. A 'born educator', he 'never checked a struggling thought.'

That is why he got so much done while he was with us. That is why he, now behind the veil, gets so much more done.

It was precisely for this reason that the magazine was able to withstand the terrible and really tragically sudden shock of the Master's withdrawal from the mundane sphere. It did more, in fact. In appearance and matter it showed a distinct improvement upon the issues that had been printed and published immediately after the transition from the burning plains to the cool heights of the inner Himalaya, of which I wrote earlier in this series.

Only in a measure could this improvement be traced to the overcoming of the transitional dislocation and vexations. In a far larger measure and certainly in a much more important sense, it was directly traceable to the manner in which Swarupananda, intent upon the mission, picked up the gage cast by the Fates and devoted himself single-

<sup>4</sup> Sister Nivedita (Miss Margaret Noble) in *The Master as I saw Him*, No. 16. Published in No. 133 (Vol. 12) of *Prabuddha Bharata* in August 1907.

mindedly to the emprise. This he did so long as there was breath in his physical body.

\* \* \*

At least to me—a reader of *Prabuddha Bharata* even in those far-away days—no small amount of inspiration came from Swami Vivekananda's epistles that Swarupananda began to publish in the magazine, hardly had the master's ashes become cold. No. 1 appeared in the issue for December 1902.

It had been written from the Darjeeling residence of the Maharaja of Burdwan on the 6th April 1897. The Bengali text was Englished by 'V'.

This initial stood for Swami Virajananda, who then was, I seem to recall, Swarupananda's understudy. Very young then, he had come to appreciate, perhaps better than any other disciple, the importance that the guru had attached to one item of the many-sided, constructive programme he had laid down for the sanyasis of the Ramakrishna Order. This was the restoration to the motherland's daughters the status and rights that had been their foremothers' during the age when woman was the nation's *shakti* (energy) in fact as well as in name. He had already contributed several articles in which he sought to resurrect from the glorious past, paling in consequence of the rush of Western light, some of the feminine figures that, through learning and heroic deeds, had helped to make that age golden. Through the degeneracy that is the inevitable consequence of dependence, the 'rising generation' of our men—were they men?—left these heroines to be remembered by the 'ignorant and the superstitious' persons.

Epistle No. 1, translated by 'V', had been addressed by Swami Vivekananda to a woman.<sup>5</sup> How very significant! How characteristic of the Swami!

<sup>5</sup> I believe Sarala, daughter of J. C. Ghosal and Swarnakumari Devi. A grand-daughter of Maharsi Devendranath Tagore, the great Brahma Samaja leader, and a niece of the poet Rabindranath Tagore. Hers was a rich cultural, intellectual, and patriotic inheritance. She passed the B. A. Examination of the Calcutta University at 16. Plodding in the footsteps of her mother who had produced a striking social study in the form of a novel, and her father who for years was the

No name is given. It is clear, however, from the letter, that she was essaying the task of rousing her sisters from the stupor into which they had sunk, to the detriment of the entire people. For this purpose she had been publishing, in her mother tongue (Bengali), a magazine she named *Bharati*—meaning 'of Bharat', Indian.

I attach great importance to this letter because of the forthright utterance that Vivekananda gave to certain home truths. In the nature of humiliating admissions were they: but admissions as necessary to our national well-being as is the removal of a cancerous growth from the human body. 'In this country (India) there can yet be found', he wrote, 'no appreciation of merit, no financial strength, and what is the most lamentable of all, there is not a bit of practicality'.<sup>6</sup> Conceding that 'we have brains', he stressed the fact that we have 'no hands'.

There was Vedanta, for instance. It was the most precious 'item' in our heritage—but

....We have no power to reduce it into practice. In our books there is the doctrine of universal equality, in work we make great distinctions. It was in India that unselfish and disinterested work of the most exalted type was preached, but in practice we are awfully cruel, awfully heartless—unable to think of anything beside our own mass-of-flesh bodies.

Only a man of the greatest daring could have written so candidly. He must have known the risk that he ran in so doing. He was likely to be derided for maligning his own people—of 'fouling his own nest', as a critic, contemporary with him, used to write. He would have been attacked even for furnishing our political enemies and the Christian missionaries with a stick with which to beat us.

Considerations of this kind never deterred Vivekananda. He branded them as cowardly—dismissed them as such.

General Secretary of the Indian National Congress, she started a patriotic organ—the *Bharati*. Later she married Rambhaj Datta, a Punjabi lawyer-publicist, and had him change his name to Rambhaj Datta Chaudhuri, because the Dattas, though Brahmins in the Punjab, were non-brahmins in Bengal. She died recently, leaving behind a record of brilliant patriotic work.

<sup>6</sup> *Epistles of Swami Vivekananda*, No. 1. Dated 6th April 1897, and reproduced in *Prabuddha Bharata*, No. 77 (Vol. VII) for December 1902.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

In his heart there was infinite love for us. There also surged, in his blood-stream the longing to divest us of our failings and shortcomings. He believed, too, 'that India will rise again'.

This she would do if men arose amongst us who could love our people 'with the whole heart'. Our people were 'bereft of affluence'. They were 'of blasted fortune'. 'Discretion' had been 'totally lost' by them. They were 'downtrodden, starved, querulous, and envious'.

India would rise again, he believed, if only 'hundreds of large-hearted men and women had given 'up all desires of enjoying themselves to the utmost'. This they had done so that they may 'exert themselves to the utmost, for the well-being of the millions of their countrymen, who' were 'gradually sinking lower and lower in the vortex of destitution and ignorance...'<sup>8</sup>

At the moment, the Swami felt 'that our well-being is impossible without men and money coming from the West.'<sup>9</sup> Attracted by his magnetic personality, some men and

women did come to India from the United States of America and Britain. A little money, too.

The Order that Vivekananda instituted found, however, recruits from among our own people. These recruits answered to the description he had given of the men and women that were needed to uplift India from the slough of inferiority and envy. Before entering the Order they gave up 'all desires of enjoying themselves'. Thenceforward they were to 'exert themselves to the utmost for the well-being of' India's millions.

One of them, the one he himself had adjudged to be the most worthy for the purpose —Swami Swarupananda—sat upon the *āsana* (seat) in the Himalyan aerie, with the snows, in their pristine purity, glistening outside the windows, upon which his eyes lifted from the 'copy' he was getting ready for press, fell for a moment. I have already said something about his editorial capacity and shall have more to say in what follows. Also about his successors. Suffice it for me to add here that they walked in Vivekananda's footprints.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*  
<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

*(To be continued)*

## MAN'S LIFE IN THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

BY SWAMI VIVIDISHANANDA

What happens to man after death? From the dawn of civilization every thinking person must have asked himself this question. This is certainly a great mystery. Philosophers, mystics, and seers of all countries and ages have pondered over this mystery and tried to solve it. The doctrine of reincarnation is one such solution and it is as old as the Hindu race. This doctrine is considered as one of the fundamentals of the philosophy, ethics, and religion of Vedanta. Almost every Hindu, rich or poor, educated or illiterate, instinctively believes in this theory, and this belief colours his outlook upon life.

As an answer to the problem of life and death, the theory of reincarnation is the most rational and satisfactory. It makes our life in this world meaningful, explains and reconciles the inequalities and paradoxes with which we are surrounded.

Not only all the sects and schools of orthodox Indian philosophy, including Vedanta, but even heterodox Buddhism accepts reincarnation and considers it as one of the pillars of its philosophy and way of life. Historians are of the opinion that this ancient

doctrine travelled across the Asiatic continent and influenced the thinking processes and lives of many a thinker, seer, and teacher until at last it found its way to Egypt, Greece, and Italy. Although the modern Christian Church does not accept reincarnation, Christ, the founder of Christianity, and the early Christian Fathers believed in this doctrine. There are passages in the Bible and in the writings of Origen, Jerome, and other early followers of Christ which may be construed to substantiate our thesis. The belief in reincarnation spread so fast amongst the early Christians that Justinian thought it necessary to suppress it by passing a law in the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 538. A study of the works of Pythagoras, Plato, Virgil, Ovid, Plotinus, and other thinkers of ancient times shows clear traces of their beliefs in transmigration which is nothing but a faint echo of reincarnation. Says Plato, 'Soul is older than body. Souls are continually born over again into this life'. In Dryden's *Ovid* we read :

Death, so-called, is but older matter dressed  
In some new form. And in a varied vest,  
From tenement to tenement though tossed,  
The Soul is still the same, the figure only lost.

If we leave aside the ancient and medieval periods and come to modern times, we shall find quite a few thinkers, scientists, and poets supporting reincarnation. We shall quote here the opinions of a few of them. Goethe, a scientist and philosopher as well as poet, and a powerful literary force of the last century, says : 'I am sure that I, such as you see me here, have lived a thousand times, and I hope to come again another thousand times'. Huxley, a great scientist of the nineteenth century, writes in his *Evolution and Ethics*, 'None but very hasty thinkers will reject it (reincarnation) on the ground of inherent absurdity. Like the doctrine of evolution itself, that of transmigration has its roots in the world of reality.' Walt Whitman, the greatest mystic poet of America, writes in his *Leaves of Grass* :

As to you, Life, I reckon you are the leavings

• of many deaths,

.. No doubt I have died myself ten thousand •  
times before.

In the *Hibbert Journal* of July 1923 was printed an interesting article contributed by Lutoslawsky, a well-known professor of the Polish university of Wilno, and a psychologist and logician of European reputation. In the prime of his life a rank materialist, not believing in the existence of the soul and the hereafter, Lutoslawsky describes his later conversion in that article. He writes :

I cannot give up my conviction of a previous existence on earth before my birth and that I have the certainty to be born again after my death until I have assimilated all human experience, having been many times male and female, wealthy and poor, free and enslaved, generally having experienced all conditions of human existence.

In this century of ours the doctrine of reincarnation is slowly but surely penetrating the masses of the West. The unique progress of science and extensive psychic research have helped to shatter age-old superstitions and credulities. The result is that an increasing number of men and women are becoming deeply interested in reincarnation, many accepting it as a part of their religious conviction, although they may not understand its subtle implications.

## II

Before we prove the philosophic validity of reincarnation, we shall try to give here an outline of the principles upon which it is based. Reincarnation presupposes the potential divinity of the human personality, and it is grounded upon the theory of karma--the law of cause and effect, of compensation and retribution. Man is, in essence, the *atman* or Spirit, eternal, pure, perfect, free, illumined, and blissful. Unborn, immutable, and immortal, man cannot truly be said to be doomed to death, even if his body is destroyed or disintegrates. The sword cannot cut the soul of man, fire cannot burn it, water cannot wet it, and air cannot dry it. It is his body or mind that suffers disintegration. On account of ignorance, man forgets his divine nature and appears to become embodied, falsely superimposing upon himself limitations which do not really belong to him. The history of man as an embodied

soul (*jiva*) may be likened to a chain, a long chain, the many links of which represent the various births and deaths. In his struggle for self-awareness and self-realization, man gets unlimited opportunities, being born again and again under different conditions and circumstances. He acts and reaps the fruits of his acts, experiencing joys and sorrows, from life to life. His struggles continue until the supreme knowledge—the knowledge of his real Self—dawns upon him, bringing him release from the bondages of karma and its limitations. Under the spell of ignorance, man may appear to be subject to sickness, old age, and death, but it would be a great mistake, nay, a blasphemy, to think of man as 'Dust thou art to dust returnest'.

Let us mention here the nature of the mechanism of the human personality. According to Vedanta, man as an embodied soul is spirit imprisoned within three bodies, the gross body representing the outer wall, the subtle body the inner wall, and the causal body the inmost wall. The gross body, made of the gross elements of earth, water, air, fire, and ether has for its cause the subtle body. The subtle body, made of the original, uncompounded elements out of which the gross elements are manufactured, has for its cause the causal body and consists of the mind, the intellect, the ego, the organs of perception, the organs of action, and the *prana*. The organs of perception are the powers of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching; the organs of action represent the powers of seizing, moving, speaking, evacuating, and generating; the *prana* supplies the energy for the performance of all physiological and psychic functions. The subtle body is the storehouse of impressions, of experiences, of memory, habits, desires, and talents, and of those elements which constitute the character of a person. The causal body, also made of the original, uncompounded elements, is the seat of ignorance. With the dawning of self-knowledge the embodied soul rises above the bondages of the gross, subtle, and causal bodies, and these bodies last as long as the

illumined soul is destined to live.

The so-called phenomenon of death is not certainly annihilation or cessation of existence. It is only a kind of change. At the time of death, the *prana* of man contracts, withdrawing its powers from the body and the sense organs. Even as a person discards old, worn-out clothes for new ones, so man, at death, leaves his gross body and gets ready to be reborn with a new body. He takes with him his subtle and causal bodies, which contain the sum total of his karma, his habits and tendencies and his unfulfilled desires. It is his karma which determines his hereafter. The species, the country, and the family in which he will be born, the pattern of his life—his joys and sorrows, and the span and duration of time he will live in his new phase of life—all these are determined by his karma. (*Vide Yoga Aphorisms*, III. 13). Death is shrouded in mystery, because ordinarily we do not perceive the actual departure of the soul, but merely such symptoms of it as the lack of animation, coldness, and stiffness in the discarded body, and its eventual disintegration. It is the embodied soul or *jiva* that plays the role of a man, passes out of the body, reincarnates, and plays various other roles.

### III

The theory of reincarnation is concerned with certain truths and realities which cannot be tested in a scientific laboratory; hence we present it as a hypothesis. This hypothesis is indeed the most convincing and sensible, as will be shown by the following evidences.

The foremost evidence of reincarnation is the presence of inequalities and differences in this world. Variety seems to have been the plan of creation. If we study the human race, we shall notice inequalities and differences in marked degrees. Between men and men there are not only differences of race, nationality, taste, and temperament, but there are also differences of growth, talent, opportunity, and happiness. I remember reading some time ago an article in an

American magazine which brought out graphically this contrast by recording a lavish banquet, costing many thousands of dollars, and a bread line—both happening in the same block of the city of New York. One would be inclined to blame our social, political, and economic systems which permit such debauched affluence and pitiable poverty and destitution to exist; but such inequalities do exist and they exist throughout the world, being by no means exceptional. In our society we find, existing side by side, geniuses and idiots, saintly souls and congenital criminals, persons enjoying perfect health and invalids born hopelessly crippled.

It would not seem unfair if persons enjoyed advantages because of honest efforts put forth, and if persons suffered because of wilful lethargy and abuse of opportunity or misconduct in life. But there are individuals who are born with silver spoons in their mouths, not being required to exert themselves at all for their living, yet having opportunity, prosperity, comfort, and success at their beck and call. Again, there are those who are burdened with sorrow and disappointment, having failed in life, in spite of honest efforts, to improve themselves. How to account for such cases?

Only the theories of reincarnation and karma can explain them. As you sow, so do you reap. What you are in this life, you owe to your karma in your previous life or lives, and the pattern of your future life is shaped by the kind of life that you live now. If you do something good, it will come back to you as your compensation, if not in this life, in lives to come. If you do something evil, you will have to take the consequences. Our joys and sorrows, our victories and defeats, are of our own earning. We get only what we deserve.

Let us consider here the cases of geniuses. Born with extraordinary powers, they form a class by themselves, and there is a wide gulf between them and the common people. They flash upon us, as if were, manifesting their unusual talents, very early in life, with very little schooling or effort.

Pascal, for instance, mastered the major part of plane geometry at the age of twelve. Mangiamelo, born of humble parents, was a mathematical wizard at the age of five, calculating with the accuracy of an arithmetical machine. Zerah Colburn was a similar mathematical prodigy. Even when less than eight years old he could solve the most difficult mathematical problem instantly without figures. Once somebody asked him how many minutes there were in forty-eight years. In no time he startled his questioner and audience by giving the exact figure 25,288,800. Mozart, the famous composer, wrote a sonata at four and an opera at eight. Shankara, a master-mind of India and an outstanding philosopher of all times, finished his most erudite philosophical works by twelve. Rabindranath Tagore, the greatest poet of India and perhaps of the whole world, wrote some of his most beautiful poems in his teens. He wrote voluminously until his ripe old age and displayed a versatile genius, producing the very best and finest in many fields of literature. We can multiply instances by the score, but the above will suffice for our purpose.

Attempts have been made to explain geniuses by the theory of heredity. Scientists who uphold heredity are not unanimous as to its proper meaning and scope. Prevalent in the West for a long time, the theory of heredity has undergone a great change with the recent discoveries in physiology, biology, and embryology. Naturally, it has lost its original simple meaning. Space will not permit us to enter into a detailed discussion of the subject; we shall simply state its broadest conclusions and examine them in the light of reason. Heredity as defined by Haeckel is an overgrowth of the individual, a simple continuity of growth, parents handing on to children well marked characteristics, physical and mental. Opinions differ as to the exact nature of this transmission and its method, and also as to whether characteristics newly acquired are transmitted or not.

Not believing in the existence of the soul

as an entity separable from the gross body, many of the advocates of heredity are materialistic in their attitude towards the problem of life and death. Questions as to whether or not the soul existed before its birth or will survive the death of the body do not bother them at all. Following the usual method of science which proceeds by observation and experiment, they are forced to ignore the problem of the hitherto and the hereafter. We shall see that the explanations given by the theory of heredity are not satisfactory because they lead to certain difficulties. If traits, good or bad, were transferred by ancestors to children, the latter would enjoy fruits for which they have not worked, or would suffer the consequences of faults not theirs. In that case, to be fair, a prodigy does not deserve praise for his inherited talents, for he has not laboured for them, nor does a congenital criminal deserve blame or punishment for his criminal deeds, which are the outcome of his inherited tendencies. Such a theory, if pushed to its logical conclusion, would shake the foundation of our ethics and jurisprudence and lead to confusion and anarchy in our social order.

Besides, the law of heredity, as opposed to the law of karma, makes cause and effect disproportionate. To be logical, the cause should be equal to the effect. It would be difficult to find in their ancestors adequate causes for the extraordinary powers of geniuses. A study of the genealogies of geniuses shows that geniuses stand apart, having no peers, and are like freaks or accidents. You would not find another Shakespeare in the family of Shakespeare, or another Kalidasa in the family of Kalidasa. The law of karma looks upon geniuses, and for that matter, upon all individuals as entities in themselves having past histories and working out their individual destinies, independently of their families which have simply furnished them channels for self-expression. The extraordinary powers which they display they carry from their past lives and incarnations and have won for themselves. Thus they are responsible for what

they are and for what they do.

We shall present here further proofs of reincarnation. First, there is a law of logic which is universally accepted and which is often cited as a cogent proof of reincarnation. It is this : An entity cannot come out of a nonentity, something out of nothing. In other words, existence, to be true, proves the continuity of existence in the past as well as in the future. The fact of our present conscious existence guarantees our existence in the past, before birth, and also in the future, after death. Of course, if a person doubts his own existence (a sane person cannot do so), he has neither pre-existence nor hereafter. This argument can be applied very well to refute the doctrine of special creation, which believes in the immortality of the soul and yet denies its pre-natal existence.

Secondly, average human beings, including those who are learned, have a natural clinging to life. Just as a hungry person craves food, so is it instinctive in every man to desire life. Patanjali, the author of the *Yoga Aphorisms*, classifies this desire under the primary obstructions to self-awareness—obstructions that bring pain—and he also mentions it as a proof of reincarnation. The clinging to life expresses itself negatively as fear of death. In *Aesop's Fables* is narrated the story of an old wayfarer carrying something heavy on his shoulders. As he was resting by the wayside, footsore, tired and disgusted with life, he called on Death, saying, 'Where art thou, Death ? I am tired of life.' In answer to the man's prayer, Death suddenly appeared and said, 'What can I do for you, O man ?' The wayfarer was taken by surprise at the sudden appearance of Death. Not yet ready to depart from this world, he slavered and said, 'If you will kindly help me to lift this load on my shoulders...' This story has a great deal of truth in it. Oppressed with trials and tribulations, one may sometimes welcome death, but at the moment of death he will perhaps be reluctant to pass away. Some medical men are of the opinion that ordinarily sane persons can commit suicide only under the spell of temporary insa-

nity. Why is man afraid of death? Fear of death presupposes experience of death and its concomitant pains and uncertainties, in previous lives. This experience, conscious at one time, has become instinctive through repetition.

Thirdly, in addition to the fear of death, we have many other instincts which are equally clear proofs of reincarnation. For instance, a newly born baby shows a natural desire for the breast of its mother without any instruction from any one. If you watch its behaviour, you notice that it is temperamental, having pronounced likes and dislikes. It has not been born with a blank mind like a clean slate. In animals, instincts are more clear-cut than in human beings, for animals are guided more by instinct than by reason. For instance, a new born duckling hatched by a hen, does not hesitate to run to water and to be perfectly at home there, although the foster-mother hen is afraid and tries to intervene. In the forest where deer live in constant fear of predatory animals, a newly born fawn is on its feet right away and begins very shortly to run, for that is how it can save its life. A monkey newly born learns instantly to catch hold of the branch of a tree. All these are examples of instinctive actions, proving previous experiences in previous lives.

#### IV

The objection against reincarnation that we do not have any memory of our past lives is not at all valid, as we shall show below. A normal adult enjoying sound health can, by making an effort, recall the outstanding incidents of his infancy, childhood, and youth, but his pre-natal life is altogether a sealed book to him. To say nothing of having no memory as to who he was or what kind of life he lived, in what place, or for how long, he is absolutely in the dark as to whether he existed at all—direct evidence being absent; and this forgetfulness is a limitation to which nearly every man, high or low, educated or illiterate, is subject. We read of persons who have prodigious memories, being able to

retain and reproduce verbatim everything they hear, read or experience. The memory of even such persons is limited to this life, failing to reach further back.

It will not be difficult to account for this specific forgetfulness. The average man who lacks spiritual enlightenment is so identified with his body that he cannot function in mind and consciousness without the co-operation of the body. Whenever such a person experiences anything, the experience leaves an impression not only on his mind but also on his brain. If either of these impressions is somehow or other lost he cannot have any memory. At the time of death when he parts with his body he has to leave behind the impressions of his experiences recorded in the brain. When he is reborn he has a new brain which, though fashioned in the mould of his predominant tendencies, does not contain the impressions of the past. Of course it is true that his mind still retains impressions of the past in the subconscious, but the detailed memory of the past is not possible in his case because of the lack of co-operation of his new brain, which does not possess the impressions.

Although forgetfulness of past lives is the general rule, there are exceptions, and they constitute our last evidence, a powerful evidence, of reincarnation. We know cases of people, especially children, who have demonstrated a partial or full memory of their past incarnations. Many years ago in Calcutta, an American lady gave a talk on reincarnation. In that talk she narrated the story of a little girl belonging to the part of the country from which she herself had come. This little girl would often say to her mother, 'You are my mother, where is my other mother?' In the beginning her mother did not pay any attention to this unusual query. Some time later, the mother happened to visit a friend of hers, a lady living two hundred miles away from her own home town. The little girl accompanied the mother. As soon as the girl saw this friend of her mother's, she ran into her arms and said, 'Here is my mother, here is my mother!' Later, this little girl started

recounting the many things, toys, etc., which she had left in the different rooms of the house. The lady had had a daughter who passed away shortly before the time when this little girl was born. Being very much attached to her daughter she had kept all the belongings of her daughter just as she had left them. To the surprise of all concerned, all the things that the little girl mentioned were found in their usual places. A similar and equally interesting incident happened in a small village not far from Tarakeshwar, a holy place of Bengal. In this story also, a little girl, reborn after her death, into the same family, gave an uncanny account of her past incarnation which tallied in its details with the facts. Not having been an eye witness, I confess I cannot vouch for the authenticity of these two stories, but they are not the only instances known.

Sri Krishna has said in the Gita :

O Arjuna, many are the births of mine and thine that have been passed. I know them all, but you do not, O Scorer of Foes. (IV, 6.)

This remark of Sri Krishna witnesses not only to the reality of reincarnation, but also to the fact that there are people who have memories of their past incarnations. Of course, such people, who are called Jatismaras because of their unusual memories, are few and far between. In Buddhistic literature we read of the many birth stories of Lord Buddha. Tradition has it that Buddha, after he had attained Illumination, remembered the detailed incidents of as many as five hundred of his previous incarnations, and that he would recount those incidents to his disciples for their edification. I cannot resist the temptation of referring here to one story which has been included by Edwin Arnold in his *Light of Asia*. According to the story, Buddha, having been born as a brahmin and feeling compassion for every being, gave his own body to a famished tigress.

In this sceptical age, many may not put credence in anything connected with Krishna and Buddha, both of whom lived more than two millenniums ago, and may reject the tale as mere legend. We therefore refer our

readers to the biography of Sri Ramakrishna, who lived in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Some of those who caught the fragrance of Sri Ramakrishna's divine life and were blessed by his touch, were alive until recently. About himself Sri Ramakrishna said more than once and in unmistakable terms, 'He that came as Rama and as Krishna is Ramakrishna in this body.' He expressed himself similarly about some of his disciples, telling them who they had been in their previous incarnations. In Swami Vivekananda, his foremost disciple, he recognized the ancient illumined sage Nara; in Swami Brahmananda, his spiritual son, a playmate of Krishna; in Swami Yogananda, Arjuna to whom Krishna had delivered his message of the Gita; and in the Swamis Saradananda and Ramakrishnananda, two disciples of Christ. Sri Ramakrishna's statements were the result of spiritual revelations. To some of his devoted disciples who were deeply grieved and disconsolate after his passing, Sri Ramakrishna appeared and said: 'Why do you grieve? Where am I gone? It is just like passing from this room to another.'

If death means complete separation from the body, including the brain, how is there any possibility of reviving the memory of past lives? To this question our answer is that, although ordinary persons cannot remember the experiences of their past lives, illumined ones can. Having realized that they are the Soul or Spirit they can function in mind and consciousness independently of the body. Besides, to their illumined vision, the memory of their own past lives or of those of others may come automatically, or they may be able to revive that memory if they so desire by dint of their perfected concentration. The one-pointed mind of a Yogi may be compared to a very powerful telescope. Just as a powerful telescope reveals to us stars existing millions of miles away, not visible to the naked eye, so does the concentrated mind of a Yogi reveal to him things invisible to others. Patanjali writes in his *Yoga Aphorisms*: 'By perceiving impressions, one has past memory.' (III, 18.) By impression Patanjali means

impressions of past lives stored in the subconscious mind. If any one is curious about knowing who he was and what he did in his past life or lives, he will have to develop supreme self-control and power of concentration. Besides, he will have to explore the dark chambers of his subconscious mind and visualize and rearrange the impressions stored there according to their chronology. Of course, it is not child's play. We, for our part, are not interested in this; for what reason have we to suppose that we lived such admirable lives in the past? Going through the labyrinths of past lives may sound inter-

esting to a superficial observer, but it would perhaps be a thousand times worse than having the worst nightmare. It is a blessing that we have closed that chapter, although we are not deprived of the wisdom we have gained in past lives, for we have it with us. Now, how are we to account for those cases in which we find unillumined persons born with memories of their previous incarnations? So far as our information goes, such persons have only partial memories, and they are perhaps born with those memories in order to work out some karma of theirs. That is all that we can say about it.

## BUDDHA'S SCHEME OF LIFE

BY DR. M. HAFIZ SYED, M.A., PH.D., D.LITT.

It may be interesting to note that Buddhism has no priest. The members of the Order have, therefore, no authority over the laity, they only explain to it the doctrine when asked to do so. The members of the Order are also teachers and most of the temples are monasteries. These are used as regular schools. In the Order itself there are no superiors and subordinates; no one is forced to obey another, for Buddhism does not aim at the modification of intellect and will, but on the contrary at their strengthening and independence. In this connexion we should do well to note how averse Lord Buddha was to maintain in any shape or form the authority of the priesthood. It is a well-known fact that shortly before his death Lord Buddha refused to name a chief for the Brotherhood, the *Sangha*, but instead he referred his disciples to the doctrine as their guide. He said, 'Be ye a guide to yourselves, be your own refuge; let no one else be your guide and refuge'. This clearly precludes the possibility of any type of priesthood.

Buddha, while emphasizing the transitoriness of the outer world, strictly enjoined on

his followers to refrain from inactivity and indifference to one's own duty. His clear words are these: 'It is better to live only one day and to work energetically than to live a hundred years in idleness and laziness'.

Buddhism is the one religion in the world that has repeatedly and rightly emphasized the holiness of humanity as a whole. It makes no distinction of caste, creed, colour, race, or country. It values love towards all beings, rich or poor, high or low. It goes a step further and enjoins that one should not hate one's enemies.

Buddhism demands not only strict and lofty morality, but also knowledge. It demands that we follow the doctrine, not because that we believe in Buddhism or any dogmas, but because we are convinced of the Truth and universal applicability of its precepts by our own reflection and consideration. Once Lord Buddha said: 'It is proper and very natural that doubts should arise in you; blind belief is to be rejected. Do not judge by hearsay, nor by tradition, nor on mere assertion, nor on the authority of so-called sacred writings; nor believe in anything because an ascetic or a teacher has

said it. But when you yourself perceive that these things are wrong, these things are objectionable, these things when done produce woe and suffering for us and others, then reject them.' 'Can anything be more liberal and enlightening than these precious words? Would a modern man in India not welcome this independent attitude of mind?

Miracles play no small a part in the life of almost every religion of the world. Buddhism, of all the religions, is the one that strongly deprecates and discourages the performance of miracles in any shape or form. Buddha specially forbade his disciples to perform miracles of any kind, and one of the four Acts which entails expulsion from the Buddhist Brotherhood is boasting about being able to perform miracles.

Let us remember that genuine Buddhism is the reverse of mystical, rejects miracles, is founded on reality, and refuses to speculate about the absolute and the ultimate cause.

At the time of Buddha there existed in India the greatest toleration in regard to the propagation of religious and philosophical opinions. This large-hearted toleration Buddhism has maintained to the present day. During more than 2500 years of its existence in this world Buddhism has not converted a single person by force, nor has there been spilt a single drop of blood for the propagation of the doctrine. During the reign of Ashoka there existed greater liberty of thought and wide toleration than in modern days. Ashoka's precious words will hold good even unto the present day. 'Treat everybody with consideration, even the poor and the wretched, yea, even slaves and servants.' It is remarkable to what degree Buddhism denounces every kind of coercion and highly values personal liberty. It aims at liberating man from all chains and ties, bodily, spiritually, religiously, and socially. Sir Edwin Arnold calls Buddhism the grandest manifestation of human freedom ever proclaimed.

Science means knowledge and the Buddha taught that knowledge of the *Dhamma* must be acquired today, by analysis, experiment,

and reasoning, not by a blind belief in dogmas or an equally unreasoning 'faith'. In brief, the Buddhist is a spiritual and mental scientist.

### Politics

Generally speaking Buddhists take no interest in matters of mere worldly government. For the Buddhists, as 'for Confucius, the peace of the world depends on the regeneration of the inner life of the individual. The reconstruction of the world means the reconstruction of individuals.' (*Philosophy of Confucius*, C. Y. Hsu, p. 37.) A Buddhist will, therefore, to the extent that he takes any part in 'party politics', presumably support that section of the community which he thinks will give the individual the greatest scope for quiet self-development, but in this, as in all other matters, his choice is absolutely free.

Buddhism as such has no concern with any country's government, for its field of operation is the inner, not the outer man. Buddhism is a matter of self-discipline and development, and as such has no concern with obedience to any orders unless self-imposed. On the other hand, every Buddhist is a member of some nation and as such submits himself to that country's government and laws. Presumably to the extent that it encourages concerted action for the benefit of social ends, it may be described as socialistic; on the other hand, to the extent that it encourages individual self-development, it is individualistic; but if it be socialistic, it is a form that strives to level up and not down.

Buddha certainly proclaimed a spiritual equality or brotherhood, but the standard of equality was nothing less than that of the perfect man to which all living things will, in the end, attain. But brotherhood does not imply equality, for brothers may be of a different age. Hence the *Sangha*, the Order which Buddha founded, is 'ruled', to the extent that such self-governed individuals need any ruling, by the elder Brother's suggestions

being adopted by their juniors, while the vote of the eldest by their juniors will be the most respected of them all. Here we have in miniature a perfect blend of monarchy and oligarchy, while the free and open vote of all the Bhikkhus on a matter of importance represents the cherished Western spirit of democracy. It must not be forgotten that all forms of worldly government may be resolved into a matter of degree and none has any spiritual value or significance. If all men were concerned with nought but their own development, there would be no need for politics as generally understood, still less for the use of violent argument or force.

### War

Each Buddhist does at all times what seems to him most in accord with Buddhist principles, and one of these is *Ahimsa*, which is negatively, harmlessness and, positively, goodwill and helpfulness to all forms of life. The Buddhist is, therefore, a peaceful individual incapable of active hatred for a brother man, still less for a lower form of life. If another harms him he feels but pity in return, a genuine compassion for the suffering which the hater will experience for harbouring such evil tendencies. Not that such an attitude implies or produces weakness in any form. 'It is true that Buddhism paralyses the coarse, brutal energy which manifests in the mad struggle after wealth and enjoyment, for it teaches that real happiness is not to be gained through material possessions but only through mental and moral development. (Message of Buddhism, p. 80.)

But in fact a Buddhist leads a far more strenuous life than any soldier, for he is constantly and unremittingly at war within himself. 'Warriors, Lord, we call ourselves. In what ways are we warriors?' 'We wage war, O disciples; therefore are we called warriors.' 'Wherefore, Lord, do we wage war?' 'For

lofty virtue, for high endeavour, for sublime wisdom—for these do we wage war; therefore are we called warriors.' (Anguttara Nikaya, from *Lotus Blossoms*, p. 57.) It is a curious paradox that while such a ceaseless struggle against the forces of the lower nature is being waged within, the outward characteristic of the true Buddhist is his 'imperturbable peacefulness. For a Buddhist fights against the inward enemies of selfishness and egotism, malice, pride, and mental laziness, and in the world of men against disease and penury, injustice and oppression, and vice and ugliness in all its forms.

Is not such a struggle nobler and more dignified as well as far more profitable than wholesale murder between brother men? A Buddhist strives towards the sublimation of warlike energy into higher forms, but he realizes that war is an effect whose cause must be eradicated, and that cause, as for all other suffering, he knows to be self-seeking in its countless forms, whether of one man or a nation.

Whatever view we may take of Buddha's teaching, we must admit that in its essence it belongs to no one nation and no one age.

Moses legislated for the Jews, Lycurgus for the Spartans, Zoroaster for the Persians, Confucius for the Chinese, Buddha for all men who have ears to hear. Man, as Buddha conceived of him, is not a citizen, but a 'living entity'.

The greatness of Buddha as a teacher is proved by the fact that his scheme of life—so simple and yet so complex, so obviously and yet so profoundly true, so modest in its aims and yet so daringly ambitious, so moderate and yet so extravagant in the demands that it makes on our spiritual resources—provides for the needs of all men, in all stages of development, of all moulds of character, of all types of mind. (Vide The Creed of Buddha, pp. 84, 85.)

## QUITE UNEXPECTED

BY AN ASPIRANT

It was somewhere in the sea, to use a military parlance. I was in a steamer crossing a strait. It was twilight in the morning. Rolling waves were dashing against the boat. The sky put on a fading grey appearance, excepting in the western horizon where there was a reddish hue. The steamer was over-crowded. I went upstairs to the deck. The deck was quiet. There I found a man in white uniform : he was the Captain of the boat. I told him that I was there in order to see the sunrise more clearly. Generally the passengers are not allowed there. But he did not raise any objection to my being there.

There was infinite vastness in front, behind and above. No other vessel could be seen even at a distance. Though there was the sound of the screaming engine and the roaring waves, one felt that one was engulfed in a great silence that pervaded the atmosphere.

One does not like to talk much in such an hour and in such an environment. My attention was intent on the eastern sky, looking at the variegated play of colours. But gradually conversation began. Anyhow he took interest in me, and I in him. Soon I found that he was of a deep religious bent of mind—a devout Christian. He was standing alone—rather pacing to and fro—wrapped in his own prayerful thought, before I trespassed on that solitary corner. I could realize this very clearly, when the conversation became more familiar. He had with him a string of beads with which he was saying his prayers.

'If I am not too curious, may I ask what do you say by way of telling beads?' I said.

He saw the earnestness which prompted such a question ; he understood also the innocence which was behind the curiosity. He gave a kindly look at me, took me to his

room, opened the Bible and showed me the 'Lord's prayer'. He said that whenever he found a little respite he repeated his prayers and told his beads. He had a responsible duty to perform. He had to be constantly on the alert. But whenever he could afford to divert his attention, he diverted it to the thought of God.

That is a strange thing ! In the midst of his taxing duties, this man was trying to keep up an undereurrent of holy thoughts. This was quite unexpected !

'What do you gain by your prayer?' I asked him. 'What is the utility of the unnoticed life you are pursuing ?'

'Oh, it has got a great utility', he rejoined. 'It gives me a great peace of mind. Even in the midst of great crisis, I am calm and unruffled, I never lose faith in the goodness of God and the benign dispensation of Providence. Not only that. At a time when there is a severe storm, the boat is in danger, the passengers become panicky, and the crew become dispirited, I can put strength to their fainting heart. At such a time, without losing courage in the least, I run up and down to set things right wherever they show a tendency to go wrong. I tell one and all that God will surely protect us. Through His grace everything will be all right.'

It might be a consoling philosophy at a time when one is faced with a great crisis, but can you ignore the naked fact that there is evil in the world ? That in spite of the goodness of God there is suffering in life ? Man has got to face bereavement, he has got human weaknesses to wrestle with, he suffers misery, he suffers death.'

'Yes, there is ev'l in the world,' he said, 'I do not deny the existence of evil. But that is also for the good of man. There is suffering and misery, so that man will think

of his Maker, will contemplate on the Lord. Otherwise he will become puffed up, he will think that he is all in all.'

'But is there no other way of teaching man humility?' I asked. 'God is all-powerful and omnipotent, you will say. Why did He not create man a better being, so that he would not have to pass through this severe education before he could be good, humble, and devout?'

This was perhaps too perplexing a question for him. He was one of those persons who are fortunate enough to possess a faith that does not know how to doubt, a faith which is innate, genuine, and spontaneous.

He looked at the small bronze figure of Christ in crucifixion in front of his table and said, 'Why should you doubt the goodness of God because there is evil in the world? God sent Jesus to the world for the redemption of humanity. Christ died on the cross to take upon himself the suffering of mankind. Our duty is to meditate on His life and teachings, to pray to Him in the hours of trial and at the time of difficulties. If you can do that, you will be free from all worries and anxiety. You see, some time back I lost my daughter. It did not perturb me. I have got a pretty large family to maintain. That does not worry me. Even my official life is not altogether without difficulties. A few days back some military people, going by this boat, created a great trouble for me. The matter went to the higher authorities. But I was firm. At last it was found out that

I was right and the military people were in the wrong. My superiors have got absolute confidence in me and my honesty. They know I am very conscientious in the discharge of my duties. I work for pay no doubt, but I always keep in my mind the idea of serving the people to the best of my ability. You know, once there was a difficulty about sweepers, and I myself cleansed the bath-rooms, so that the passengers might not have to suffer any inconvenience. In such cases I don't stand on prestige. To me all work is sacred. To serve humanity is the greatest religion. People suffer because they do not live a religious life, because they do not pray.'

'Can you say that the prayer to God is answered? Does God change His method or plan because of the prayers from the suffering victims? Have you experienced that your prayers have been heard?' 'Well,' said he, in great enthusiasm, 'some have been heard, some not. In some cases God gave what I wanted, in others He did not. But that does not bother me. God does what is good for me. That is my belief, that is my conviction.'

It was time for him to go to his duty. He bade me good-bye.

The man spoke in all sincerity, and without the least trace of egotism. I admired his faith and conviction. If by faith one can have so much peace and happiness, strength and solace, is not that something very precious? What more does a man need?

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND MODERN PEDAGOGY

BY CHUNILAL MITRA, M.A., B.T.

At a time when the secondary schools are clamouring to secure trained teachers, when the different systems of education are being on their trial and wane, when the stalwarts of some nations are labouring hard to frame post-war educational schemes and when

speaking against or in favour of any existing system of education as final is premature and preposterous—it is gratifying and worth-while to take stock of the methods and principles of education Swami Vivekananda had had for his countrymen—what he had professed and

practised in his life as an unnamed teacher. At the outset it can be said without any fear of contradiction that in him were embodied all the qualities which go to make a teacher, able and efficient. And with all the possibly outstanding modern means and methods at his possession he can be called a model teacher of the age and for the ages to come. This point we shall illustrate briefly.

It is said that *personality* of a teacher counts much for his success. It is the greatest factor in an efficient teacher. With this, numerous demerits in a teacher are minimised, and without this, the predominant qualities become naught. If it be so, then Swami Vivekananda is to be recognised as the greatest of all teachers. For who else does possess a better and a stranger personality than he? His was a fascinating and galvanising personality. He himself gave out, 'The world is a great case of hypnotisation, dehypnotise yourself and cease to suffer.' Indeed he was a great hypnotiser. People were moved to awe and admiration at his call and they were spell-bound to his address as if surcharged with a magical wand. Whoever had come in contact with him became either his disciples, followers or admirers in some way or other as if they were electrified. All this was simply because of his absorbing personality.

His *physique* itself was a great factor in the formation of a good teacher. Out and out was he a *priyadarshi*. Any modern teacher would consider it as his privilege and pride if he could possess such a build, such a stalwart and imposing figure like the Swami's. He was not merely to be adored but people were to be awed by his appearance. This aspect is not to be so summarily rejected nor is it to be loosely taken. For, in a teacher his personal appearance is to be taken into account and significantly construed. So, in this respect perhaps no other teacher before or after him and even today possesses such a figure like him. Next, if symmetry, harmony or proportion is considered to be the fundamental factor in the measurement of the philosophy of beauty, then he was

exquisitely and ideally beautiful. He was a type by himself and as such all other beautiful objects or persons seem to be copies of which he was, in Plato's words, 'the Idea, the Form and the Norm of Beauty'.

Next to the personality and personal appearance, Swamiji was doubly privileged in having both a sound head and a good heart. And in contents and qualities also they were full. It is said that apart from the knowledge of the subject-matter which he is entrusted to teach, the teacher is required to have a sympathetic heart for his pupils. In other words, the teacher must first *capture* and win the heart of the students by his loving care and attitude in order not only to make the subject interesting but also to make the teaching at all effective and fruitful. The Swami had the requisite qualification in this respect too. For who else had loved his pupils more than he? He was a great lover of his countrymen—nay, a greater lover of humanity. His heart bled for others and was full with the milk of human kindness. This love and compassion for his countrymen led him to posit: 'Let feeding the poor and cladding the destitute constitute the religion of the country for the coming hundred years.' The implication of the utterance was nothing less than this that he realized in his heart of hearts that no amount of plans for reformation and reconstruction would be of much good unless the poverty of the country is wiped out, unless the poor, the destitute, the homeless and the helpless are raised to a higher strata of society.

It is said withal that, to cope with the rising generation and particularly with the advanced students, a teacher is to be thoroughly equipped with the pros and cons of the day's lesson. Not only a knowledge of the former and later days' lessons will do, but he must be conversant with the latest findings of all allied and relevant topics. He must always be alert and on his guard to answer all queries of his pupils in the class room. The days of a hush-up, a silent demeanour and an ignorant simplicity have gone. The teacher behaving in this manner

will not only be laughed at but will soon find himself dethroned. But Swami Vivekananda was a successful teacher in this respect. He had a mastery of the subject which he proposed to talk over and teach. Aptly has it been said of him, 'If we look upon Ramakrishna as the Buddha of our age, Vivekananda was all the Buddhist monks and preachers boiled into one personality.' His fertile brain and intellectual equipment were sufficiently tested and conspicuously proved at the great Parliament of 1893. There he was not one man talking to another, but he was face to face with the entire intelligentsia of the world. He was well armed with all the intricacies of all the religions of the world. As a result his cause triumphed and Hinduism was established there as a universal faith. Thus he was not only a successful teacher but a conqueror as well.

So, it is no figment of the mind nor is it indulging in any figure of speech to say that Vivekananda was a great teacher. On the contrary, he was a practical teacher and will remain to be an ideal one for all future ages. It is not too late for even so-called professional teachers to bow down at his feet and learn lessons in all practical arts of teaching in silent modesty. He practised what he preached. He was the only man in history who harmonized in his life art and science—theory and practice. This synthesis of professing and practising also is no less a merit in a teacher. It is the sign of a perfect and a fuller life. Otherwise, life becomes partial and one-sided, which derogates now as before, the status of a teacher, a guru.

Next the Swami had a synoptic view and as such, he could observe things widely and as a whole. He was a great reader and observer of man. The entire person with all his merits and demerits flashed before him. He could see as it were, like a great ancient *rishi*, the inmost depth of a man. As such, like King Vikramaditya of historic fame he was the greatest judge of men and matters. He could detect personal and national drawbacks in a way as none could. And equally he could mend and mould them.

But unlike others his method of mending was at once analytical and synthetical. His mode of approach was rational as opposed to traditional though he enriched the tradition. Though he himself possessed the great proselytising capacity in a singular manner he never tried to create havoc in any sphere. In this respect he encouraged the growth of the individuality in man. This distinguished him from all other teachers past or present. In his own words his object was : 'Each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet *preserve his individuality* and grow according to his own nature of growth.'

Again, it is said that having all the means and methods at his command no modern teacher can make a student better or brilliant without something of the 'better' *already in him* (student). In short, he cannot make something out of nothing. What he is to do and what he can possibly do is to reshape and remodel. Swami Vivekananda also realized this full well, and to the same effect he said : 'Do not try to disturb the faith of any man. If you can, give him something better . . . give him a push upwards, do so, but do not destroy what he has.' Moreover, he had this advantage over the professional teachers that he never believed in the utter badness of man. In his opinion there is nothing as branded, labelled, and marked counterfeit, alloy, base, or sinful—nothing as absolutely diabolical in man. With Rabindranath Tagore he may be supposed to think and say that 'to believe in the eternal doom of mankind is criminal'. His principle in his words was, 'Take man where he stands, and thence give him a lift'. Thus out and out a mystic, he was an optimist too. Nay, as an alchemist his mission was to transform the raw and base materials in man into a fine, pulverised finished product. He never followed any single and uniform method for all. Sometimes and somewhere it was loving and sometimes it was rebuking. Hence, it has been said of him also that he kicked but got worship in return. Regardless of the alarming consequences he fearlessly chastised men and

reshuffled traditions. His words and actions may be cited in legion in corroboration of these statements.

Nevertheless, a few pertinent questions may be raised here. If Swami Vivekananda is recognized as a great teacher what were the subjects he taught, and who were his pupils? As an answer we say that his subjects were all comprehensive. They were economics, politics, sociology and theology, and what not? What more, he undertook the arduous task of building the character of men, and as such, it was the substratum of all subjects. It is the basis and glorification of all the subjects of any university curriculum. Times without number he gave out that he wanted man-making and character-building education. Yes, that was the sole thing he wanted. In his judicious opinion, character, as Smiles would have said, is a better protection of man than a regiment of horse would have been. If it were built on a firm foundation ready to combat with all onslaughts and ravages of circumstances all else blissful will come of themselves. Thus he provided us a fundamental subject that was all comprehensive. As regards his pupils we may very well say that they comprise men and women of all ages, ranks, climes, and proficiencies, while his schools constitute all parts of his own country in particular, and those of the two hemispheres in general.

Next, it has earlier been said, consistency in thought, words and works is reckoned as an asset in an ideally successful teacher. This the Swami possessed in no less degree. Thus his illustrious life is itself a living and a perpetual lesson to all.

Lastly, in spite of all the multitudinous definitions as to the aim of education that

the educators have formulated and advanced we may take Carlyle's one—'the restoration of the perfection already in man' as final. And fortunately for us none but the Swami had perfectly fulfilled this in his life. He heralded the immense possibility of the soul and the inner divinity of man. He never believed that education is the mere juxtaposition of ideas or the pouring down of some dead and dry bones of facts, but the assimilation and the realization of them. His life-long mission was to translate all ideas and beliefs into actions. Thus even the latest Wardha Scheme of education has found its scope in his assertion of the dignity of manual labour. The burden of his teaching was 'work more, speak less'. Hence it is not without reason that the Ramakrishna Mission has been doing yomen's service in the relief of the poor and the distressed, the famine and the flood-stricken, and that the Order has been producing year after year from its various centres all over the world Sannyasins who are at once great scholars, workers, organizers, and orators. The reason of this once again is that it had the impetus and the incentive of such a teacher and educationist at its background as the great Swami.

The subject will be left unfinished if we fail to mention one thing more. The outstanding cause which made Swamiji a great successful teacher was that he was a *great learner*. Never was found a disciple so dedicated and surrendered to his preceptor as the Swami was. He lost his identity even in his master—the great Paramahansa. In this respect he explained in his life the august utterance of the Gita that learning is best attained through devotion—devotion to the teacher first, to the subject next.

## SHANKARA'S ADVAITA-VADA AND ITS BEARING ON PRACTICAL LIFE

By PROF. AKSHAYA KUMAR BANERJEE, M.A. .

Shankaracharya is generally known and admired as the illustrious founder of the great non-dualistic system of philosophy and of the great sanyasi organization of India, devoted to the propagation of this system throughout the length and breadth of the country. For more than a thousand years his philosophy has been exercising unrivalled influence upon the thought and life of the Indian people. It seems to have given a distinct mould to Indian character. Even, the illiterate people of the lowest strata of society had their outlook on life and the world perceptibly influenced by the philosophy of Shankara. Swami Vivekananda has rightly said that Hinduism means Vedantism. At least since Shankara's time Indian culture has been essentially the Vedantic culture. Shankara was not merely a philosopher, not merely a religious teacher ; but he was the greatest nation-builder and thought-leader of post-Buddhistic India.

Adverse critics of Shankara think that, with his extraordinary genius and organizing ability, Shankara has implanted in the minds of the rank and file of India several spiritual ideas which stand permanently in the way of the development of Indian nationhood and the growth of national prosperity and military power in the country. The most dangerous doctrine, which he has preached through all his forceful writings and with which his sanyasi organization has moulded the outlook and character of all sections of the Indian people, is that the world is without any reality, that it is as unsubstantial as a dream or illusion, that all our interest in worldly affairs, all our efforts for power, prosperity, and happiness in this life, all our endeavour for scientific knowledge and exploitation of the forces and resources of nature,—are due

to our Ignorance and are incompatible with true knowledge. All kinds of activities, he has taught, are born of Ignorance, and a truly wise man—a man who has learnt to look upon the world from the standpoint of truth—cannot consistently and sincerely devote himself to any action, whether selfish or philanthropic, whether physical or intellectual. The activities and attainments, which are admired by men of common sense as the noblest and the most useful from the worldly point of view and upon which the development of our individual and national character and the advancement of our social, political, and economic interest depend, are condemned by him as altogether unworthy of men of true wisdom and knowledge. On account of Shankara's extraordinary influence upon the cultural atmosphere of India, men of the highest order of moral equipments and intellectual powers renounce the world, because indifferent to all mundane affairs, and seldom condescend to come down to the field of action.

Thus Shankara's doctrine of the illusoriness of the world is regarded as responsible for converting the good and intelligent people of India into men without high worldly ambition, without enthusiasm for work, without zeal for scientific pursuits, without any spirit of fighting and conquering, without any dynamic and vigorous ideal of life. Men of character and intelligence of all grades of Indian society are taught to think, from the very early stages of their life's career that the true success of their life consists in getting rid of this illusory world, in realizing the utter falsity of all phenomenal realities, in shaking off all attachment to this life and whatever pertains to this life, in being perfectly convinced that the self has

absolutely no connection whatsoever with the physical body, the senses, and the mind, and that it is eternally pure and impersonal, infinite and universal, perfect and blissful, having nothing to pursue and attain. This being the ideal of life prevailing in the cultural atmosphere of the country, how can we expect the growth of sturdy manhood here?

Secondly, Shankara's teachings are criticized, not only as having for ever blocked the way of worldly progress in India, but also as having rooted out the possibility of the development of a dynamic moral and religious spirit in the people. The individual self is proclaimed to be eternally and naturally identical with Brahman, the universal self, and as such to be by itself infinite, changeless, perfect, and blissful. It has really nothing to gain or lose as the result of good or bad actions in this practical life. What is ordinarily regarded as self-development or self-degradation in our moral life has no connection with the true self. The individuality of the self is illusory, and hence morality also is false. Good and evil of the phenomenal life are all the same to the true self. If this idea reigns supreme in the consciousness, how can there be any real zest for moral goodness, any earnest endeavour for acquiring merits through the performance of virtuous deeds? If the human self has nothing to gain in its inner life, why should a man be prepared for making sacrifices of his earthly comforts which his body and mind naturally demand? Why should he make any serious struggle for fighting with his normal nature and checking his natural impulses, passions, and desires, which are directed towards the objects of sensuous pleasure? Why should he feel any enthusiasm for rendering services to others, for relieving the distress of the suffering fellow creatures, for adding to the strength, prosperity, knowledge, and happiness of the nation or of the human race? Why should he think it necessary to lead a good and noble life at all, if he knows that his true self does not acquire any merit and make

any progress thereby?

People are exhorted to get rid of ignorance, to be indifferent to the world, to shake off the false identification of the self with the psycho-physical embodiment and to realize the identity of the self with Brahman. For the achievement of this purpose, the cultivation of any positive morality is not needed, the development of a dynamic and forceful moral character is not required, active services to and sacrifices for the good of humanity are not demanded. It demands, at the most, a negative morality consisting in abstention from such deeds as may disturb the calmness and tranquillity of the mind and put obstacles in the path of concentration and self-realization. It may be said to require a sort of moral lethargy, and not moral activities, absence of positive vices and not presence of positive virtues. Among the orthodox followers of Shankara's philosophy, even such men are found as do not feel any prick of conscience when their sensuous propensities and worldly temptations occasionally lead them astray, on the ground that their inner self is not in any way affected by these illusory vices of the illusory psycho-physical organism. The doctrine that the self is above morality strikes at the root of positive and dynamic morality in human life.

Thirdly, the religious spirit, which is found among the ordinary people of India, exists, it is supposed by many critics, in spite of the philosophy of Shankara. Shankara's *advaita-vada*, they maintain, cannot be the basis of any dynamic religion in human society. Every individual self is really identical with Brahman and as such is eternally free from all bondage and sorrow. A man does not or should not require any systematic religious discipline to attain *moksha* (liberation from bondage and sorrows), inasmuch as *moksha* pertains to the essential nature of his self. The human consciousness is urged on from within by an inherent yearning for getting rid of sorrow and bondage, for transcending finitude and limitation, for attaining a per-

fectly free and blissful state of existence, and this is the real basis of genuine religion. But the fire of this yearning is extinguished, when it is learnt that what is falsely supposed to be the ultimate ideal of spiritual life realizable only through lifelong strenuous efforts really constitutes the true nature of the self. This essential nature of the self is only to be intellectually known as such, and not to be attained by any form of systematic religious discipline. According to this doctrine, men may be prompted to philosophical discourses, to study the scriptures, to think and contemplate and concentrate attention on the true nature of the self, and thereby to enjoy the pleasure of a deep intellectual conviction, and not to adopt a vigorous religious programme which is necessary for the attainment of an unattained object, for the realization of some unrealized ideal, for reaching some distant goal of life.

Fourthly, apart from the question of the ultimate ideal of human life, religion, in order to be dynamic and vigorous and to play an important part in our individual and collective life, demands the cultivation of a sincere and earnest faith in, and a deep and all-governing love, admiration, and reverence for, a Personal God,—a God who is the sole Source of all phenomenal existences, to whom we are under absolute obligation for the performance of all our duties, and with whom personal intercourse is possible. In the absence of a strong faith in the ultimate reality of the divine Personality, there can be no sincere love, admiration, and reverence for God, no deep sense of obligation to Him, no genuine consciousness that we owe our life and reason and all that we possess and value to this Supreme Lord of the soul and the universe and that we are answerable to Him for the proper use of all His merciful gifts in all the fields of our self-expression. It is the sense of duty to God that can raise all our duties in all the spheres of our activities to the higher spiritual plane. All our domestic, social, and political duties as well as all our acts of charity, sympathy, and kindness are then converted into religious

duties. Love and devotion to the Lord of the universe guides and regulates and refines and sublimates all our activities, internal as well as external, big as well as small.

Thus faith in a Personal God is generally held to be the basis of dynamic and effective religion. But Shankara's *advaita-vada* has taught the Indians that the Personality of God is as illusory as the individuality of the self and the diversified world of its actual experience. Brahman is really impersonal and attributeless ; He has no feeling, no will, no actions, no knowledge ; He has no relation to this false world and no relation to ourselves ; He does not command us to do anything or to refrain from doing anything ; He does not listen to our prayer and accept our worship ; He does not reward our virtues and punish our sins ; He cannot be an object of love and reverence ; He is not the real source of our existence ; He is not the self-conscious and self-determining Creator and Ruler of this phenomenal world order ; there can be no question of our duty or obligation to Him. Personality is regarded as falsely ascribed to Brahman in relation to this false world. How can such a conception of Divinity be the basis of any dynamic and effective religion ? Can any intelligent man have the heart to pray to and worship either a false Personal God or a real unrelated Impersonal Being ? Who can have any fervour to love and revere and be devoted to either an all-glorious Lord that does not really exist or a heartless powerless attributeless pure Existence ? Who can sincerely consider himself responsible for properly conducting his life to a non-existent Master or an abstract Principle ?

Further, sentiments play a prominent part in religion. These sentiments are generally stimulated by our study of, and reflection upon, the phenomena of this world. The wonderful harmony and adjustment and beauty and sublimity of the created universe inspire us with a sense of the omnipotence, omniscience, majesty, lordliness, and perfect artistry of its supreme creator and rouse in our consciousness the sentiments of awe, wonder, admiration, love, and reverence.

The more deeply and extensively we study the phenomena of nature and mind, the more are these religious sentiments developed in us. But, it is said by the critics, the teachings of Shankara make us indifferent to the world order and disparage the religious sentiments it awakens in us. Who would waste his time and energy in seeking deeper and wider acquaintance with a false show and be deeply moved by its beauty and sublimity? Aspirants for the highest truth realization are taught by Shankara, not only to free their consciousness from all passions and ignoble feelings, but also from all religious sentiments and moral fervours, so that the mind may be perfectly calm and self-concentrated and practically contentless. If all noble and purifying sentiments are sought to be killed in this way by the best men of society, how can any dynamic religion prevail in the country?

In the foregoing paragraphs I have briefly stated the main charges which are brought against Shankara's *advaita-vada* from the standpoint of its bearing on the practical life of the Indian people. Now, the unique influence of Shankara's philosophy upon the general outlook and the national character of Indians is admitted by all,—by the followers as well as the opponents of his philosophical system. Almost all the great philosophers and religious reformers who flourished in the different provinces of India after Shankara's time started in their philosophical quest and religious discipline from the fundamental ideas obtained from Shankara's teachings. There were among them some formidable opponents of Shankara's philosophy. The *bhakti* schools of the middle ages severely criticized his views on God, soul, and the world. They made religion more emotional than intellectual. Their contribution to the national culture of India is undoubtedly substantial. But none could dislodge Shankara from his unique position as the thought-leader of India. He did not, like many other illustrious religious teachers, found any particular religious sect. He was not any sectarian Avatar (God in-

carnate), initiating a particular form of religious discipline. He was the interpreter of the soul of India—of the essence of Hindu culture. Hence his influence was irresistible to the Hindus in general, however they might differ in their sectarian views. If any one asserts that the post-Buddhistic Hinduism, which binds together so many sectarian religious systems within its fold and furnishes them all with a common stable foundation, is really the creation of Shankara, we cannot easily refute the assertion. Accordingly, when the adverse critics hold Shankara responsible for the drawbacks of the Indian national culture and the weaknesses of Hindu national character, he cannot safely disown the responsibility. It is our duty to make a deeper study of his teachings and to judge impartially whether the defects are inherent in the nature of his philosophical and religious doctrines or they originated from the unfortunate misunderstanding, misinterpretation, and misapplication of his essentially sound doctrines.

Shankaracharya was born in a small corner of Southern India at a time when politically India was divided into a large number of independent states, not often hostile to and at war with one another, practically without any ideal of all-India national unity before them. Socially, the people were divided into numerous races and tribes, castes and sub-castes, classes and sub-classes, with various grades of culture and various kinds of manners and customs, some being considered untouchable and unapproachable to others. Religiously there were innumerable sects and sub-sects, each having some sort of philosophy and some special type of moral and spiritual discipline, and differences of religious views and practices often led to bitter antagonism among neighbours and sometimes resulted in political hostilities and social repressions. Buddhism and Jainism and some other organized religious systems had struck severe blows at the long-developed and deep-rooted faith of the Aryans and the Aryanized non-Aryans in general in the old religious, moral, social,

and cultural traditions of the Aryan race and in the infallibility and unquestionable authority of the Vedas and thus slackened the bond of cultural union among the otherwise diverse sections of the Indian people and shaken the very foundation of India's national unity. Thus at Shankara's time India was a land of many states, many religions, many societies, many cultures, and the ideal of one undivided holy India, cherished by the ancient *rishis*, *munis*, and Avatars, and preached through the sacred literature of the Hindus, was practically lost.

What India required at this time and for all time to come was an all-comprehensive philosophy and an all-harmonising view of life, which might rally under one spiritual banner all her moral, religious, and cultural forces, which might peacefully bring about unity among all the races, tribes, castes, and sects of this vast country without any violent attempt at destroying their distinctive characteristics which might reconstruct the nationhood of India on a cultural and spiritual basis with all the diverse elements within her bosom. This was the gigantic task which Shankara undertook to execute. It may be noted that India is an epitome of the world in more senses than one, and that any formula which could unify and organize the various elements of this sub-continent must be dynamic enough to bring about peace, harmony, and unity in the entire human world.

In a world inhabited by numerous races and communities, divided into many political states and social organizations and actuated by different economic interests and cultural ideals, spiritual unity alone can be the surest and strongest unifying force. If a solid basis of the spiritual union of mankind can be discovered, it is likely to establish peace, harmony, and unity in the midst of all the diversities prevalent in the world. Shankaracharya directed his spiritual insight and intellectual genius to the discovery of the spiritual basis of the unity of mankind. He wanted to make it the foundation of

Indian nationality and world brotherhood. He searched for it within the spiritual treasures of India, left by the ancient seers and sages. As the result of his wide search and deep meditation he discovered the ultimate basis of unity among all diversities in the absolute non-duality of Brahman and the identity of the individual souls with the one Absolute Spirit.

He found out and proclaimed that it is the one Absolute Spirit who appears in diverse names and forms, who manifests Himself as innumerable orders of conscious individuals and as unconscious objects of experience, who alone truly exists in all. He preached that all differences are apparent and the unity is real. He taught men to concentrate their attention on the unity and to overlook the differences as far as practicable,—to see the one in all, the spirit in all material bodies, the universal in all the individuals. He wanted to awaken the universal consciousness in all individuals and sections of humanity and to make it the basis of their morality, religion, and worldly progress.

Self-love is universally recognized to be instinctive in all living creatures and to be the most potent force determining their activities. It is this self-love which leads the creatures to struggle for existence and to enter into friendly and hostile relations with others. All progress and all destruction, all the enjoyments and all the sufferings in the world of living beings are governed by this instinct of self-love in them. All human beings also are guided by the same instinct. They naturally worship their self. Their intelligence is generally at the service of this instinct. They form families, societies, states, in order to satisfy more efficiently the demands of the self-love. They find that co-operation with others is as much necessary for their self-preservation, self-development, and self-fulfilment as antagonism and struggle. The result is that in spite of all the friendly organizations, all the ties of affection and fellow-feeling, all the communities of interests, the human world is a field of continual warfare—wars among indi-

viduals, wars among families, wars among societies, wars among nations. The human soul always, seeks to get rid of these wars, but in its attempts to get rid of them it finds itself engaged in fresh wars. It yearns to be at peace with the outside world, in friendly relations with all its environments, for by that means alone the self can enjoy peace within itself, can live in security, can avoid the constant fear of distress and death. But as the interest of one self is in conflict with the interests of others, hostilities become inevitable.

How to get rid of this undesirable position ? Shankara finds the permanent solution of this problem in the truth realized by the *upanishadic rishis*. He proclaims : Enlighten your self-love and the problem ceases to exist. The enlightened view of the self is that the selves are not really many but one. When a man definitely knows that Brahman, the universal self, is the true Self of each and all, that there is absolutely no difference between the self of one individual and that of another, that the apparent differences lie only in names and forms and not in essence, self-love, which is instinctive in every one, becomes universal love, love for all creatures. All his actions, which own their origin to self-love are then converted into loving services to all. All conflicts of interests then appear to be baseless ; they appear to have originated from ignorance about the true nature and true interest of the real Self which is the same in all. He says : Discover your true self and you will find yourself at peace with all, in the most friendly relations with the entire universe. Hence the fundamental problem of human life is—how to discover the true Self, how to emancipate our consciousness from the in-born ignorance about the nature of the self. To know the Self means to be in love and friendship with all men, all creatures, all the world, because it means the experience of the inner sameness of all. For the sake of the Self itself, every one should be in love with all others, since these others are the embodiments of the same Self. If this truth,

this oneness of the Self of all, be the foundation of our family system, social system, political system and religious system, every family should find its own self embodied in all other families and should love and serve them in the spirit of love and service to its own self, every social organization, every political state, every religious community, should look upon others in the same light, should love and serve others in the same spirit. Unity being real and differences being unreal, there should be no strength in the quarrels and conflicts, no emphasis upon the clashes of interests, no eagerness to rob or exploit or enslave others.

Is not this ideal capable of inspiring us with a dynamic religion and a positive morality ? I learn that I am inwardly identical with the infinite external Absolute Spirit, who is the ground and support and substance of the entire objective world, that, as such, I am essentially pure and good, great and sublime, beautiful and blissful, that I am really one with all—my existence embracing and pervading the existence of all creatures,—that there is truly nothing outside of, colliding with, and setting limits to, my true Self. I learn that it is only through ignorance that I experience myself to be a poor, weak, miserable, sinful creature, and I think of myself to be a helpless slave to the forces of internal and external nature and various worldly circumstances beyond my control. Should not this message rouse my dormant spirit, activate my potential faculties, inspire me with indomitable self-confidence, and urge me on to shake off as soon as possible, in this life, all the apparent weaknesses, limitations, sorrows, and bondages which sheer ignorance has imposed upon myself ? Should it not impel me to sacrifice all the transitory earthly possessions and sensuous enjoyments, to undergo all the physical hardships and mental privations, and to gladly and earnestly adopt any systematic course of bodily and mental discipline and regulate all the activities of life, with a view to getting rid of this unaccountable ignorance and self-delusion and realizing “—

infinite, immortal, all-pervading blissful character of my true Self? The normal human nature being what it is, this message of the greatness of the true Self ought to be a source of dynamic religion to all human beings of all grades of culture and civilization and all strata of the society.

Shankara wants to base religion on the sense of the dignity of man, and not on the sense of his smallness and helplessness. He teaches us that we are essentially divine,—divinity pertains to the very nature of our self,—and that we are only to realize it by dint of our independent efforts. We have not to be delivered from any real sin and real sorrow which pertain to our real nature, with which we are born and over which we have no control, by the merciful intervention of any supernatural power or benevolent Personality. We have not to wait till any future day of judgment or even the day of our release from the physical body, for reaping the fruits of our religious faith and spiritual culture. Shankara teaches us that all sin and sorrow are false so far as the human self is concerned, that all sense of sin

and sorrow is born of ignorance, that we are suffering from them just as we suffer in dreams and hallucinations, and that we require only enlightened Self-consciousness—we are only to be awakened to the true character of our Self—in order to be released from them in this very life. Religion consists in realizing the Truth and abandoning the false, in becoming what we truly are and delivering ourselves from self-deception, in enjoying the glory of our own spiritual nature and freeing it from the limitations and sufferings falsely imposed upon it. Religion consists in awakening the Brahman consciousness in ourselves, in directly perceiving the presence of the same self in all beings, in seeing the Infinite and Eternal in all finite and transitory things of the world, in feeling the essentially spiritual character of the entire universe. Practical knowledge of the unity of the self with all is the test of genuine religion. A truly religious man should see Brahman in himself and all, love Brahman in himself and all, serve Brahman in himself and all. Shankara's religion is the religion of life, and not the religion of death.

*(To be continued)*

Strength is the one thing needful. Strength is the medicine for the world's disease. Strength is the medicine which the poor must have when tyrannized over by the rich. Strength is the medicine which the ignorant must have when oppressed by the learned. And it is the medicine that sinners must have when tyrannized over by other sinners.

What makes you weep, my friend? In you is all power. Summon up your all-powerful nature, oh mighty one, and this whole universe will lie at your feet. It is the

Self alone that predominates, and not matter. It is those foolish people who identify themselves with their bodies that pitifully cry, 'Weak, weak, we are weak'. What the nation wants is pluck and scientific genius. We want great spirit, tremendous energy and boundless enthusiasm, no womanishness will do. It is the man of action, the lion-heart, that the goddess of wealth resorts to. No need of looking behind. Forward! We want infinite energy, infinite zeal, infinite courage, and infinite patience, then only will great things be achieved.

## THE FRIEND

BY TANDRA DEVI

I came out of the realms of sleep,  
Wandering into the land of dreams ;  
My eyes opened on a dark place,  
Though the sun shone in at my window.

Was it the dark that blinded me ?  
Or was it the dazzle of the sunshine ?  
I know not !—I was blind—  
This I know, and naught else.

After interminable wanderings—  
Insufferable weariness and pain—  
I came out of the realm of gropings,  
Into a place neither light nor dark.

A hand held mine without gripping,  
And a voice called to me without sound.  
A fire came down without burning,  
And rose up smokeless from my heart.

O Ramakrishna ! These were thy gifts  
To this sad one lost in desolation.  
What shall I do for thee now ?  
For thou needest nothing in all the worlds !

Myself is indeed a poor gift  
Yet mine all is here, and I offer it.  
Thou hast offered me thyself, which is All  
I give back myself, become nothing !

The beauty of all things is in thee  
May thy sweetness melt the heart of the  
world !  
The glory of God is thine—  
May souls in misery receive it as manna of  
heaven !

## GOD WITHIN MAN

BY SAINT KABIR

In the midst of water the fish is thirsty :  
How I laugh and laugh to hear of this !  
Vainly dost thou wander, O man ! To what purpose art thou running to  
Mathura and Kashi ?  
That which thou seekest outside in all directions is within thine  
own house, but thou knowest It not.  
The deer getting the fragrance of the musk which is in its own navel  
runs about in the woods in search of it.  
Listen, O brother ! sayeth Kabir, thou canst meet thy Imperishable Lord  
without much ado.

\* \* \*

Now the Supreme appears in me, and lo ! now I appear in the Supreme ; thus  
shineth the light of our union, even as rays on quivering water.  
Glory unto the Sadguru, sayeth Kabir, whose mercy revealeth the  
Lord here and now.

—Translated by Prof. S. N. L. Shrivastava, M.A.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### To OUR READERS

*Conversations with Swami Shivananda* lays bare some of the deepest convictions of the Swamiji, and indicates the high level of his spiritual attainments.... The Editorial discusses what Hindus think of Christ and Christianity.... St. Nihal Singh continues his story of the *Prabuddha Bharata* in *A Backward Glance*, and recounts what happened after the passing away of Swami Vivekananda.... The eternal problem of man's life after death is learnedly elucidated in *Man's Life in the Past and in the Future* by Swami Vividishananda.... Dr. Syed's *Buddha's Scheme of Life*, is a continuation of his brilliant article in the Golden Jubilee issue of the *Prabuddha Bharata*.... *Quite Unexpected* should prove an unexpected treat to our readers.... In *Shankara's Advaitavada and its Bearing on Practical Life*, Prof. Banerjee has shown with a great wealth of learning and reasoned arguments how baseless are most of the criticisms levelled against Shankara's philosophy.... *The Friend* is by Tandra Devi, the talented poetess who has made India her home, and is doing much for cottage industries in Kashmir.... Prof. Shrivastava has given a lucid and inspiring rendering of one of Kabir's songs in *God within Man*.

### USE OF ATOMIC ENERGY

Though the war has ended to the great relief of all, most people are apprehensive of the prospects of future world peace. But the one important subject that is exercising the minds of all classes of persons throughout the world is the atom bomb. This 'scientific savagery' which in no wise is more humane or less barbarous than poison gas and chemical warfare of any type hitherto known, has aroused a chorus of protests from many quarters. George Bernard Shaw is reported to have remarked :

The latest discovery is that not only we have made startling intensification of chemical warfare, but it is possible for the explosive to be too explosive. It may burn down the house to roast the pig.

Mr. Shaw doubted if any one had the right to drop such a bomb, and expressed the fear that 'the ultimate consequence of exploding atoms may well be explosion of the world'. It is no wonder that the Dean of St. Albans, who had the courage to follow the dictates of his conscience, refused to hold the thanksgiving service as a protest against the use of the atomic bomb. Those who have persuaded themselves to justify the use of this weapon on grounds of scientific research or military necessity may view such protests with derisive indifference. But as even Mrs. Roosevelt has said, a grave responsibility rests on the militarists and scientists who are in possession of the atomic bomb—a responsibility the burden of which they will have to shoulder with great circumspection.

The Bishop of Chichester made the following pertinent observation :

There are certain deeds which science should not do. There are certain actions for which scientists should not be made conscripts by any nation. And surely, extermination of any civilian population by any nation is one of these.

The Bishop of Chelmsford said :

The harnessing of atomic energy to human progress and well-being might have ushered in an era of prosperity and happiness. Instead of that men have used new knowledge to slaughter and mutilate their fellows on a gigantic scale. Undoubtedly we are progressing somewhat pretty rapidly, but it is to an abyss.

Dr. Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury, observed :

On the deeper level, history shows mankind ever accommodating its conscience to more deadly and inhuman forms of war, abandoning one restraint after another. Another long step has been taken to the abyss and the shame of taking it is upon us. Mankind having looked into the abyss will be unable to recover itself if there is another major war or if every nation secretly seeks to exploit atomic energy to more efficient military uses against the day of another war.

There is every indication that these sincere

protests and warnings may fall flat on those concerned with the manufacture and employment of atomic power for teaching a quick lesson to those whom they consider their enemies. Some are there who talk with relish of the 'success' of the atomic bomb in bringing the war to a speedy conclusion. There are others who think the victims of the bomb have been only too rightly served for their own wickedness in waging war. Whatever that may be, one shudders to think of the monstrosity of the next war, if and when it comes, with the different nations using atomic bombs against one another. It is clear the countries that hold the secrets of the atomic bomb will dominate the world. General Arnold of the U.S. Air Force is reported to have expressed satisfaction at the possession of weapons far superior to those of other nations. 'They are making the world safe for the Americans', he said, and added that America 'could dominate all Asia with atom bombs'.

It is, however, encouraging to hear, in the midst of these appreciations and protests, that leading politicians are seriously thinking of exercising effective control of the atomic bomb. Declaring that 'unless the forces of destruction now let loose are brought under control, it is vain to plan for the future', Mr. Attlee, British Premier, has taken steps to set up a committee to deal with the atomic bomb. How far the big powers will succeed in maintaining the expected amount of international control, time alone can show. But the development of atomic energy for industrial purposes should be taken up without delay by scientists all over the world. We hope in India too, our scientists will receive adequate facilities and support from the government and the public for atomic research. The well-known Indian scientist, Dr. H. Bhabha, expressed the view that, given proper education and facilities for work, the Indian mind was perfectly capable of keeping pace with other scientifically advanced countries. Sir J. C. Ghosh thinks the post-war application of this source of energy to peaceful development

of power for the benefit of mankind will be immense. British and American scientists are also highly optimistic about the tremendous possibilities of this new source of power in the fields of industry and medicine. The man in the street is only too eager to see these hopes realized before long.

The atomic energy, like every other gift of nature to man, may be used for purposes constructive as well as destructive. If its exclusive possession by one or two nations means their unrivalled supremacy over others, then peace and fellowship are a far cry. It will be a challenge to other nations some of whom may not rest till they discover a greater and more powerful weapon. Violence engenders more violence. The weaker nations will have to submit to exploitation with more docility on pain of complete extinction. Scientific discovery in the hands of 'unscientific' man may well prove the proverbial Frankenstein's monster. As Aldous Huxley writes in one of his recent books,

We understand the devilishness of the political manifestations of the lust for power; but have so completely ignored the evils and dangers inherent in the technological manifestations that, in the teeth of the most obvious facts, we continue to teach our children that there is no debit side to applied science, only a continuing and ever-expanding credit. The idea of progress is based on the belief that one can be overweening with impunity. (*Time must have a Stop*, p. 274.)

#### HOW FOREIGNERS SHOULD VIEW INDIA

Indian culture, philosophy, social and religious traditions, in fact everything Indian, are misunderstood and misrepresented by many a Western writer. The demands of war brought a large number of foreigners, British and American mostly, into intimate touch with the real life of India. Most of them, hitherto biased through unfair propagandist literature on India, were, no doubt, surprised and pleased to see things for themselves. We are happy to find that the U. S. Army authorities have afforded facilities to their personnel for closer understanding of Indian culture through a series of extension

lectures arranged by the Calcutta University. The need for proper assessment of the age-old culture and civilization of India by outsiders was emphasized by Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookherjee inaugurating this series of lectures.

Dr. Mookherjee said that the world was very small now and it was necessary that people should come to know each other deeply. He asked the audience not to be too hasty in their judgement on India, not to be like tourists or travellers, who, after having gone through India in three days, wrote books of three thousand pages, and thus became authorities on India. He declared that India had one of the oldest civilizations and had not only things of the spirit to give to other nations but also contributions in modern sciences. The message of India was unity in diversity. India looked forward to cultural fellowship with other nations. (*Hindusthan Standard*).

Hardly had Indians learnt to ignore the contents of Miss Mayo's *Mother India* when a recent and more glaring instance of nauscating anti-Indian propaganda came to light. This time it was Beverley Nichols, pronouncing his *Verdict on India* after 'over a year's intensive study of modern India'. Dr. Mookherjee's sound advice to these Western authors, journalists, and tourists who generally come to India as 'impartial observers' or 'friends', was to study India through Indian eyes, with the right attitude of mind. In order to appreciate the many aspects of India's cultural heritage, non-Indians will have to uncover their blinkers of narrow racial or national prejudices. To a newcomer from any part of Europe or America, the poverty, illiteracy, and squalor of India are quite apparent. But if he has the sincerity and the patience to get over his first shock and look deeper into the spirit of India, he is sure to find a cultural unity behind all diversity of race, language, caste, and community.

#### FROM WAR-TORN EUROPE

Europe is once again breathing the fresh air of peace after experiencing the dreadful nightmare of war for five and a half years. We give below relevant extracts from a letter (dated 23rd July 1945) received from Dr. A. P. Berkhout of Aneldoorn (Netherlands):

....After the nightmare of a tyrannical oppression

it is with a deep feeling of relief that we, the people of the Netherlands, are greeting a new and, we hope, a better period....

....The blue sky is no longer spoilt with roaring, fighting planes—the mind is seeking freer paths of thought again, freer than was possible in these five years, time of hope and of fear.

It was this week I read two books, in Dutch translation, by Romain Rolland about the Swami Vivekananda. In tension and with deep emotion I read the story of his life and acquainted myself, a first survey, for it consisted in extracts from R. Rolland of his works, with his teachings. I cannot but repeat the words of Rolland: 'Those words, buried under the shroud of books, at a distance of forty-five years, I cannot hear them without receiving an electric shock.'

It was as if smothering congenial in me was touched upon, as if I had been unconsciously longing for the thoughts and teachings I read, I should perhaps say heard out of these books, these extracts of the lectures of Vivekananda.

The idea of Advaitism was not strange to me. Schopenhauer's philosophy, his 'Will' as the immost essence of the creation prepared me for this idea. Particularly fruitful for the world, for the poor, harassed, and still so self-sufficient Europe in the first place, seems to me the idea of Unity, fruitful, because essentially true....

....Extremely valuable to me is Vivekananda's conception of religion as religion of deed, and his free acceptance of all religions and creeds as potential ways to God, if only we can see God in our fellow-creatures. (Italics ours).

The only thing that astonishes me is that so little is known of Vivekananda and his gospel in our country. I never heard any one speak about him; in the most important encyclopaedia in Holland, his name is not mentioned, nor in a well-known German encyclopaedia I consulted. This winter I read his name, in connexion with the *ahimsa* principle, in a book (*Peace as Deed*) of a well-known Dutch writer and anti-militarist, Bart de Ligt. And so it is that I ordered the books of R. Rolland, after our liberation.

I cannot explain the fact why Vivekananda is comparatively unknown in Western Europe. (I generalize, perhaps unduly, but in my reading of Dutch, German, French, English books, I never saw his name mentioned: I except scientific works dealing with mystical experience, mystical religion). I risk the supposition that in the chaos of opinions and doctrines of these decenniums, even the most pure and essential, universally necessary gospel is likely to pass hardly noticed. Our world has no time and attention for it....

Our correspondent, a genuine lover of India and her eternal philosophy, expresses his feeling of gratitude that he might acquaint himself with 'such a life, such an heroic heart, such a powerful mind, such stirring words' as Swami Vivekananda's. It is a clear indication that India's message of eternal wisdom is much sought after by the peoples of war-worn Europe. A return to the more fundamental values of life is one important aspect of post-war reconstruction.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION.** By S. N. AGARWAL, *Published by Vora & Co., Publishers Ltd., 3-4, Round Building, Kalbadevi Road, Bombay 2, Pp. 47. Price Re. 1-4.*

The problems of present-day education in India are many and varied. Ever since English was introduced into Indian schools, Indians have had not only to learn the language but also to learn everything in that language. The drawbacks of our system of education imparted through the medium of a foreign language are obvious. Lately some Indian educationists have earnestly taken up the problem of educational reform in our country, and are of the opinion that English should be replaced by the mother tongue as the medium of instruction. This is undoubtedly a move in the right direction, though it may not be as easy as it appears. In the book under review, Principal Agarwal discusses, in brief, the question of the medium of instruction and its importance in our national life. He is convinced that the English medium of instruction is responsible for the failure of the Indian educated youth to face the stern realities of life. In the early years after English was introduced into India, Indians gradually took to it in order to secure public service; consequently the Indian languages were relegated to the background. Soon it became the fashion to be able to speak and write in English. Many considered it a worthy asset. But today Indians find themselves in an unenviable position. 'With political slavery, intellectual slavery has entered our blood and bones with disastrous results.'

The author is an experienced educationist, and his treatment of this important subject is thought-provoking and stimulating. The question of a common language for the whole of India has been discussed at different times by different bodies of persons. The matter is no doubt urgent and requires careful and thorough consideration. Perhaps a national government will be better able to tackle the problem, though it is by no means simple to decide upon a *lingua franca*. The present treatise is a valuable contribution to the effort in that direction. A few of the objections to the introduction of mother tongue as the medium are clearly answered in the book. The author commends the successful work done by the Osmania University in introducing Urdu as the medium of instruction and in publishing Urdu text-books. This may serve as an example to other Indian Universities, and each province may take to its own most common vernacular. The learned writer feels that the provincial governments should make the mother tongue medium compulsory in all classes up to the high school. He does not desire that English should be eschewed totally. The author has closely studied the subject of the medium of instruction from different points of view, and has made out a strong case in favour of changing over from English to the vernaculars. An excellent foreword by Mahatma Gandhi has enhanced the worth of the book. Rehabilitation of the Indian language is the beginning of the process of nationalizing education in our country.

**PRACTICE AND PRECEPTS OF JESUS.** By J. C. KUMARAPPA. *Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Pp. xiv+111. Price Re. 1-8.*

Mahatma Gandhi writes in the foreword: 'The booklet presents Professor J. C. Kumarappa's views

on Christian teaching in a nutshell. It is a revolutionary view of Jesus as a man of God. It is none the less revealing and interesting. The interpretation of the Lord's prayer is novel and refreshing as are many other interpretations.' Prof. Kumarappa, a devout and learned Christian, presents, in these pages, an admirable interpretation of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ based on the four Gospels. He is one of those who have come into contact with Hindu thought, and have been able to understand Jesus through the oriental setting and background. His exposition of the teachings of Jesus is fascinating, and free from the narrow and exclusive views of the Church. There may be many Christians who are not disposed to agree with him. But that does not in any way minimize the appeal which this bold and original interpretation makes on Christians and non-Christians.

Prof. Kumarappa says he was perplexed at the contradictions between the teachings of Jesus and the 'Christianity' of the Churches. He failed to understand this deviation of the Christian theologians from the practice and precepts of Jesus. Referring to the disparity between theory and practice, he says he was unable to 'reconcile the worship of a Universal Father and the Prince of Peace with tribal appeals to destroy the enemy'. There is a lot of truth in his statement that the majority of Christians in India often imitated the habits and standards of life of the Westerners and associated themselves more with Western culture and civilization than with the national culture of India. The following pages are written with a view to clearing the parochial and sectarian mists that envelop the bright spiritual personality of Jesus. The author has derived much inspiration for his work from his intimate touch with Gandhiji. The book will be read with much interest by one and all, irrespective of whether he is a Christian or not.

**TO WOMEN.** By AMRIT KAUR. *Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Pp. 33. Price 6 As.*

In this well-written brochure, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur presents her valuable thoughts and ideas on the problems that face Indian women, educated and uneducated. She is an indefatigable and experienced worker in the cause of women, and as such her suggestions for improving the lot of the poor and illiterate women in our country merit careful consideration. Her appeal is made mainly to the educated and well-to-do women of India who reside mostly in towns, urging them to give their spare time to the unselfish service of their less fortunate sisters, both in the towns and the villages. Women's organizations have confined their activities generally to the towns, and the considerable number of women in the villages of India need to be educated and to be encouraged to bring into play their dormant qualities of head and heart. The writer has worked more among the town dwellers, and discusses the solutions to their problems at length. She has put forward some very practical and helpful suggestions to be followed by women workers.

**ALLAHABAD UNIVERSITY STUDIES.** *Published by Senate House, Allahabad.*

As usual, the Allahabad University has brought out separate booklets for its different sections of studies in arts and science, containing valuable original contrib-

butions from distinguished scholars and professors of the University. They are as follows: (1) English Section: *The Plays of Eugene O'Neill*—by P. C. Gupta. (2) Education Section: *Development of Factorial Analysis—A Critical and Constructive Study*—by Dr. Bansi Dhar. (3) Law Section: *International Law, Retrospect and Prospect*—by K. R. R. Sastry. (4) Politics Section: *Edmund Burke on Indian Governance*—by Beni Prasad. (5) Chemistry Section: *Epidemic Dropsy and Mustard Oil (Parts I and II)*—by Dr. C. C. Palit, Dr. S. N. Basu, and V. L. Varma; *Studies on the Dependence of Optical Activity on Chemical Constitution (Part XXII)*—By Bawa Kartar Singh, Onkar Nath Perti, and Birendra Narain Singh. (6) Zoology Section: *Cytoplasmic Inclusions in the Oogenesis of Some Forest Insect Parasites*—by P. N. Chatterjee; *Studies on the Sexual Cycle in the Lizard, Hemidactylus flaviviridis (Ruppel)*—by S. K. Dutta. (7) Biology Section: *New Trematodes of the Family Echinostomatidae, Poche 1925 (Parts II and III) Genus—Peta-siger*—by V. Vrat Nigam. The book brought out for the History Section contains a brilliant study entitled "The British Government and the Kingdom of Oudh (1761—1858)" by Capt. J. Paton. He was First Assistant to the Resident of Oudh for a number of years, and this interesting narrative throws much light on the working of the relationship between the rulers of Oudh and the British Government during a period of over seventy years.

**THE BEST FOOD FOR MAN.** By DR. ANNA KINGSFORD. Published by International Book House, Ltd., Bombay. Pp. 19. Price 6 As.

The article, republished here in book-form, was originally contributed to the *Theosophist* by Dr. Kingsford in 1884. She advocates the use of vegetarian food from the point of view of economy, health, and nourishment. She seems to be rather hard on non-vegetarians. Food experts are divided in their opinions on the comparative merits of the different forms of diet, so much so that the ordinary man is completely confused. The question "What is the best food for man?" has been asked as well as answered again and again but with little effect. No amount of logic can persuade man from taking to what is best suited to his tastes. Nor does it seem sound to argue for or against a type of food in the name of religion or God. For none can authoritatively and convincingly prove what God's will is in such matters. If it be said that unwillingness to give up meat-eating betrays a morbid craving for the palate, then the non-vegetarians may say such craving is not absent in the vegetarians too. In India, where many persons live on scanty fare, such academic discussions on the value and nature of food is not likely to arouse much interest.

**21 SHORT STORIES. (INTERNATIONAL SERIES No. 3.)** Published by International Book House, Ltd., Bombay. Pp. 170. Price Rs. 3-8.

We welcome the third of the series of contemplated seven books of picked stories and poems. Twenty-one more stories have been presented in this volume including one from an Indian writer, Masti Venkatesha Iyengar of Bangalore. In keeping with the publishers' intentions

the stories are well chosen and present a colourful variety. Oliver Goldsmith, Edgar Allan Poe, Anthony Hope, W. Durant, and Charles Dickens are some of the more familiar authors represented here. The book under review is likely to score a success even as the two preceding ones have done.

**PRACTICAL NATURE-CURE.** By SARMA N. A. LAKSHMAN. Published by the Nature-cure Publishing House, Pudukkottai. Pp. 541. Price Rs. 8.

In its seventh edition, the book under review has undergone some alteration, and a number of additions have been made. The book may prove more useful in its improved form.

#### BENGALI

**BHARATER PARICHAY.** By NALINI PRABHA DUTTA, M.A. Published by Bengal Publishers, 14, Bankim Chatterjee Street, Calcutta. Pp. 114. Price Re. 1.

Here is a book the importance of which outweighs by far the smallness of its size. By wealth of a deep insight into the spirit of Indian history and a true evaluation of the ideas and ideals that ancient India stood for, the book stands out as a remarkable publication in recent times.

The learned authoress is an educationist of experience and wields an able pen. According to her the future growth of a nation must always be rooted in its past. The education through which future generations of our land are to be brought up must be based on the long-cherished ideals that inspired Indian life through ages.

The nation is just rising from a long slumber. Thoughts of reconstruction are exercising its mind. But the influence of an alien civilization allures it from the old moorings of its life to a new path altogether. It reigns to its genius. It is high time that the age-old best ideals of India are held before the people in clear terms and the solution of all her problems is sought in the light of them. The book under review is devoted to that end. It throws abundant light on all our social, educational, and other perplexing problems and shows the way to their solution. We commend the book whole-heartedly to all our readers.

#### SANSKRIT

**ISHIVARA DARSHANAM. (VOL. I.)** By SWAMI TAPOVANA. Published by V. Virvanath Vaidya, Damodarketu Bungalow, Saurashtra Society, Ahmedabad. Pp. 10. Price Rs. 2.

The book describes the life of a great Malabar sanyasi who spent several years in the Himalayas (in Garhwal) in great contemplation and austerity, and has been able to help many seekers after Truth. It is a welcome addition to Sanskrit religious literature.

#### BOOKS RECEIVED

**AWAKE HINDUSTHAN.** By SHYAMA PRASAD MOKERJEE. Pp. 260. Price Rs. 2-8.

**HINDU POLITICS.** By N. C. CHATTERJEE. Pp. 134. Price Re. 1-8.

Both published by Editor, "Hindusthan", 162, Bow Bazar Street, Calcutta.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE COSSIPORE GARDEN HOUSE

#### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION'S APPEAL

The nucleus of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission was formed in the Cossipore garden house (90 & 90½, Cossipore Road, Calcutta), where in the year 1886 Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna spent the last days of his glorious life with his disciples, and entered into Mahasamadhi. Foremost among these disciples was Swami Vivekananda, whose contributions to the spiritual advancement of the world are well known. The house and its compound of about 3½ acres, where they used to live in the service of the Master and practise spiritual exercises under his divine inspiration, have been intimately associated with his hallowed memory. The disciples and devotees of Sri Ramakrishna and the general religious-minded public of diverse faiths look upon this site as a place of pilgrimage, and visit it from different parts of India and abroad. But unfortunately they do not get an easy access to it, and besides find the atmosphere of the place wholly irreligious. For not only are the premises not properly looked after, but their sanctity is also being violated by various acts of desecration. For many years a piggery was run there, and even now the place is being used for some allied purpose.

Swami Vivekananda wrote to one of his brother-disciples on the 13th July 1897: 'Don't you think it will be nice to purchase Krishnagopal's garden at Cossipore? ... In my opinion it is advisable to do so. All our associations are with that garden. Indeed it was our first monastery. ... We must have it either today or tomorrow—however big may be the monastery on the Gange. ... Try your best for the Cossipore property.'

For the above reasons we have decided to open a branch of the Organization on the site and preserve the house as an international memorial to Sri Ramakrishna. We have already applied to the Government for acquisition of the property, and nearly 2½ lakhs of rupees are urgently required to work out the scheme.

We earnestly appeal to the generous public as well as to our friends and sympathisers to lend us a helping hand in materializing this noble object. Contributions will be thankfully accepted by: The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P. O. Belur Math, District Howrah; Manager, Ramakrishna Math, 1, Udbodhan Lane, Bagbazar, Calcutta; Manager, Advaita Ashrama, 4, Wellington Lane, Calcutta.

Swami Madhavananda  
Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission

### MAYAVATI CHARITABLE HOSPITAL

#### REPORT FOR 1944

The Mayavati Charitable Hospital came into being as a sheer necessity—in fulfilment of the local needs. The condition of the villagers, mostly ignorant and poor, is so helpless in times of disease and sickness that even the stoniest of hearts will be moved to do something for them. The regular dispensary was opened in 1903. Since then it has been growing in size and importance. Now quite a large number of

patients come from a distance of even 50 or 60 miles, taking 4 or 5 days for the journey.

The hospital stands within the precincts of the Ashrama, and is in charge of a monastic member qualified for the task. There is also a qualified doctor to assist the work and increase its efficiency.

In the hospital there are 13 regular beds. But sometimes we have to make arrangements for even 30 or more indoor patients—there is so great a rush for admission. People come from such a great distance and in such a helpless condition that anyhow they have to be accommodated.

The operation room is fitted with most up-to-date equipments and as such almost all kinds of operation can be done here. This has been a great boon to the people of this area.

We have also got a small clinical laboratory, which is a rare thing in these parts. Now almost all kinds of medical help that one can expect in a city are available here.

There is arrangement for the amusement and recreation of the patients through a gramophone. There is also a small library for those who can read.

In the year 1944, the total number of patients treated in the Indoor Department was 207, of which 150 were cured and discharged, 34 were relieved, 19 were discharged otherwise or left, and 4 died. In the Outdoor Department the total number of patients treated was 10,265, of which 8,007 were new and 1,658 were repeated cases. The total number of surgical operations performed during the year was 84.

This year's receipts, including interest were Rs. 7,630-4-8, and the total expenses amounted to Rs. 4,082-1-3. The accounts were duly examined by Registered Auditors.

We cordially thank all our donors, who by their continued support have made it possible for us to carry on this humanitarian work in such an out-of-the-way place.

We regret that, owing to the situation arising out of the War, we could not run the hospital as efficiently as we desired. But we have been trying our best to tide over all difficulties.

All contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the undersigned.

Swami Pavitranaanda,  
President, *Advaita Ashrama*,  
P.O. Mayavati, Dt. Almora, U.P.

### VEDANTA SOCIETY, SAN FRANCISCO

The program of work of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, San Francisco, for the months of July, August, and September 1945 has reached us. Of the bi-weekly lectures, delivered by the Swami-in-charge, mention may be made of the following: 'How to pray?', 'What is the Grace of God?', 'The Conquest of Fear', 'The Essence and Forms of Illumination', and 'The Sacred Word *Om*'. Lectures and classes were suspended, and the library and reading-room remained closed during the summer recess from July 12 to September 18.

**WATUMULL FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIPS**  
For 1946-47

Since the Watumull Foundation announced its plan in 1944 to award scholarships to highly-qualified graduates of Indian universities for advanced study in the United States, the Government of India has announced an extensive program to send several hundred Indian students abroad each year for graduate training. In view of this extensive program, the Foundation is changing its policy somewhat in order to provide Indian universities with trained men to educate thousands of Indian students who are unable to study abroad and who will learn in India the most up-to-date scientific and technological work from the returned professors.

We propose, for the academic year of 1946-47, to award ten fellowships to young Indian faculty members of Indian universities to carry on advanced studies and research in American universities for one or two years, as individually required. These fellowships will be awarded with the definite understanding that, after their return to India, they will continue to teach in the same universities where they were employed prior to their departure for the United States, for a period of at least three years. Fellowships are open to both men and women, regardless of caste, colour, or creed.

The fellowships will be awarded in the following fields:

1. American History, Government and Foreign Policies
2. Agriculture :
  - a. Soil Conservation
  - b. Horticulture
  - c. Animal Husbandry and Dairying
3. Education—Theories and Administration
4. Economics and Sociology  
Finance, Banking and Commerce
5. Political Science
  - a. Government
  - b. International Relations
6. Journalism
7. Home Economics and Nursing
8. Applied Physics
9. Applied Chemistry
10. Sanitation & Public Health

The candidates must be of the very highest type of Indian scholar with Ph.D., D.Sc., M.Sc., M.A., B.A., or B.Sc., (First Class, First), with experience in research and three years' experience in teaching. Candidates must be 35 years or younger. Young, unmarried scholars of merit will receive preference.

*Method of Selection*

The authorities of every Indian university will select two to four candidates, who, in their judgement, are most able to acquire the knowledge of the specific subjects which they will teach in the universities after their return to India, with the definite objective that the standard and efficiency of their universities will be raised. The applications of the candidates selected by the Indian universities will be sent by the Vice-Chancellors or the Deans of the Faculty, to the chairman of the Watumull Foundation Advisory Board in India:

Mr. J. Watumull  
Opposite Holmstead Hall

Fort Road  
Hyderabad, Sind, India

When all applications are in, Mr. Watumull will send them by airmail to the special committee for the selection of scholars in the United States who will choose the ten successful candidates on the basis of merit only.

The applications must contain the following information:

1. A recent small photograph.
2. A recent health certificate.
3. A complete transcript of all studies pursued in Indian universities by the candidate, both in undergraduate and graduate work, and must include marks received, class rank, as well as any honors or distinctions won.
4. Adequate evidence of research and teaching ability.
5. Three letters of recommendation from Indian educators as well as public men, indicating not only the applicant's efficiency as a scholar, but his spirit of service to his fellow countrymen.
6. A personal letter of application from the candidate, which must state:
  - a. Full name and permanent address.
  - b. Date and place of birth.
  - c. Married or single. If married, how many children. Ages of children. Any other dependents.
  - d. Particular subject he wishes to study in the U. S.
  - e. A declaration that after his return to India he will teach in his university for three years, according to prior arrangements made with the university authorities.
  - f. Any other personal details, including a brief sketch of his family background.

Applications should be mailed to Mr. J. Watumull not later than 31 December 1945. The Selection Committee will make public its decisions early in March 1946, giving both the candidates and their universities ample notice before the beginning of the next academic year.

Successful candidates may be required to appear before a member of the Foundation's Indian Advisory Board for a personal interview at their own expense. They will be informed of the awards by cablegram and the Foundation will undertake to secure their admission in the American universities offering the best work in their respective fields. Choice of the universities rests with the Foundation. This advance notice will also give candidates time to arrange for passports, visa, etc., in order that they may arrive in the United States late in the summer of 1946. Most American universities begin their academic years early in September.

The Foundation will pay passage from India to the United States, tuition and fees in the selected American university, and allowances of \$100.00 or \$150.00 a month, according to the candidate's financial standing. This follows the policy adopted by the Foundation in 1944.









